GOKULAM

The monthly magazine for children

MAY 2000

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GOKULAM

Vol. XII, No. 11 MAY 2000

Dear children,

Congrats!

I'm sure that you have written your annual exam well and that you've been promoted with flying colours to the next higher class.

Enjoy your hols, but don't waste your time. Remember, the only loss that can never be compensated is time.

Certainly you must allot more than your usual time to relax or play; otherwise holidays will lose their meaning.

At the same time you can also plan to acquire new skills like handling computers, or new hobbies which would make a better person of you.

Allot some time daily to reading any subject of your choice including fiction. Reading exercises your eyes whereas, TV viewing tires the eyes. Reading allows you to think and kindles creativity whereas TV viewing restricts the thought process.

* Children learning silk screen printing

There are so many books available today which tell us about all sorts of scientific subjects in a very interesting manner. Buy or borrow as is convenient. Four or five of you can get together, pool your resources, buy a book and share it among you. This is the most sensible way of buying costly books. Your parents too will be happy since the pinch on their purse will not be much.

If you are travelling this summer write about your experiences to Gokulam. Interesting pieces will be published and suitably rewarded!

Love,

K. Rajendran,
Editor

Of all created things the loveliest,
And most divine are children.
— William Canton

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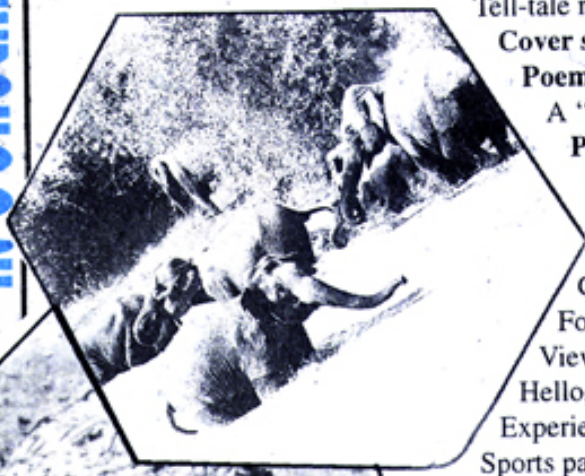

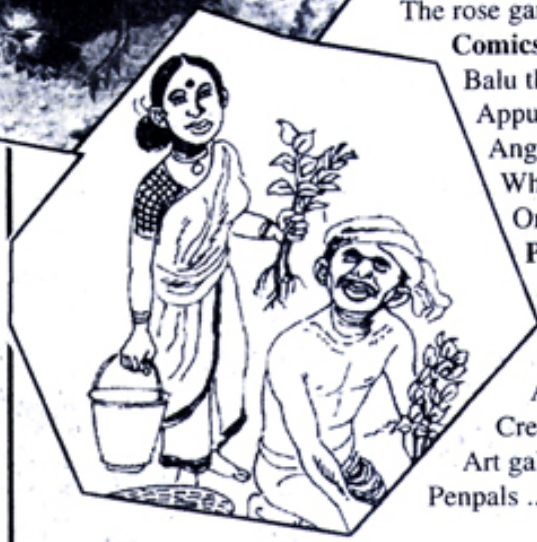

Cover illustration : THAMARAI

Letter BOX

✉ I have been reading Gokulam for the past eight years and I shall continue forever. I love comics more than stories. "Use your noodle" was very interesting and informative. Please include current affairs. Often we have a question and answer session on current affairs. Everyone in my family likes Gokulam.

S. Divya Devi, Std. X C,
KV II, Chennai.

✉ I have been reading Gokulam for five years. It is a knowledge bank. Many students in my school have begun reading it after I suggested it to them.

M. Neeha Kaushik, Std. VIII,
Nirmal Vidhyalayam,
Mahaboob Nagar.

✉ I enjoy reading *The Rose Garden Mystery* and *In the Wild*. Gokulam is a treasure.

S. Arpitha, Std. V,
Nagasena Vidhyalaya School,
Bangalore.

✉ My sister and I fight over the magazine as soon as it arrives. I like all the stories and jokes published in Gokulam.

R. Udhaya, Std. IX,
Malleshwaram LAHS,
Bangalore.

✉ Gokulam is a source of refreshment and entertainment. I have been reading it since '98.

Saajan, Std. X D,
Shanthiniketan Trust School,
Bangalore.

✉ I have been reading Gokulam for the past five years. The presentation, the comics and stories are all good. Thanks for introducing the penpals column.

P. Aparna, age 15, Hyderabad.

✉ I have sent many articles yet none have been published so far. I have 40 issues of Gokulam.

S. Yuvaraj, Std. VIII,
East Wood, Bangalore.

Dear Yuvaraj,

If your article has been selected it will be published in due course. Remember there are many contributors like you.

✉ Please continue Fantasia with a new episode. Why haven't you published my name in the penpals column

K. Ramnath, Std. XI
KMHSS, Chennai

Dear Ramnath,

Your name will be published in one of the coming issues of the magazine. You have to wait for your turn.

✉ You haven't published my contribution to Art Gallery. Why?

J. Vivek, Std. VI A
Perks MHSS, Coimbatore

Dear Vivek,

Read the reply given to Yuvaraj's letter.

BIRD FACTS

1) Some hens lay more than 1000 eggs in their lifetime.

2) Some birds eat grit and stones to help them digest their food.

* Puffin

3) The best-known species of mocking birds, which lives in North America mimics the songs of other birds.

4) Humming birds squeak. They don't hum.

5) The albatross has a wing span nearly twice the height of the average man.

6) Puffins do not have a pouch beneath their beaks like the pelicans. They can still carry fish in their beaks.

B. Pavan, age 14,
Sri Vani Education Centre,
Bangalore.

CHEE-CHEE!

Sister and Brother Undir were being exceptionally good one day. It was a Sunday afternoon. Mama and Papa Undir had woken up after a nap and were surprised to find that the two of them had already had their milk. Sister was wiping the mess off the dining table while Brother had put on some water to boil for Mama and Papa's tea. "What is going on?" Papa wanted to know.

"Why? Nothing at all!" replied Brother with a little smirk.

"Hmm! I smell something!" Mama was not convinced by their innocent expressions. A little too innocent, she thought. Papa was a little suspicious too.

"Has any one broken anything?"

"Or did you both do badly in your tests?"

"A complaint note from your teacher?"

"You want to spend the night out with your friends?"

"None of the above!" declared Sister.

"Guess again!" suggested Brother.

"So there is something going on after all!" said Mama Undir.

"Out with it!" demanded Papa.

Sister looked at Brother. Brother looked at Sister and said, "You say it!"

"Well, someone has to!" she agreed and started, "Well, you see we've seen this most adorable little baby squirrel... it is hurt..."

"And we want to look after it... to be our pet! Is that alright?" completed Brother.

The subject of pets had been discussed before in the Undir family. Mama had been totally against pets. Papa was less unwilling, but he wasn't very enthusiastic. So naturally Sister and Brother were rather hesitant. They looked at Papa and Mama pleadingly, hoping for the best.

"No, it's not alright!" Mama was quite firm. She knew that most of the work would end up being hers. Papa had made it quite clear that he did not enjoy cleaning up and feeding pet though he didn't mind if someone els did the work.

"Please! At least till the poor little squirrel is better! Please!" Sister was at her persuasive best.

"We've even named him Chee Chee because that's the sound he makes!" Brother said.

That did it! Papa Undir was mos annoyed. "It looks as if the two o you have gone quite far already! Th squirrel has to go!"

Sister and Brother were dis heartened. They slunk away to thei room where Chee-Chee had bee secretly kept in a shoe box unde Sister's bed. Sister had mad some holes in the sides and o the lid for air. Brother had pu some rags in the box to make i cozy. They had also writte CHEE-CHEE in blue letters on the lid of the shoe box.

How excited Siste and Brother had been when they found the baby squirrel! It had fallen off their banyan tree and broken a leg. So i couldn't run away. Sister had picked it up quite easily. Brother had quickly found a shoe box for it because he wanted it to be safe. But the secrecy could not go on indefinitely. Papa and Mama had to be told!

"Mama says it's too much work. But what if we agree to take care of it?" asked Brother.

"We did last time with the little bird, remember? But then we forgot to feed it and never cleaned its cage. No one will believe us!"

"Hmm! Yes. It died in a week! But now we are older. I really and truly don't want the squirrel to go. I want it under my bed!" Brother was determined this time.

"Let's ask again!" suggested Sister Undir.

"Let's not ask. We'll just look after it ourselves. It can have some of my food!" Brother was not taking any chances. He had set his heart on keeping Chee-Chee.

"Is it a girl or a boy?" Sister wondered, "I don't know how to tell."

"Whatever it is, I want it, I'm not letting it go" Brother replied.

So Chee-Chee stayed. Brother and Sister hid the box in different places. When they went to school it went into Brother's cupboard. They left the door ajar for air circulation.

Sister had read that squirrels liked nuts. So they sneaked some peanuts from the kitchen and put them in Chee-Chee's box. They also gave it some bread and bits of chappati. Chee-Chee ate well and grew stronger. Sister and Brother Undir's pockets started getting messier as food crumbs remained.

Soon Chee-Chee started scampering about in the box. But as it grew, the box became too small for comfort.

An absent-minded professor on a train was unable to find his ticket. The ticket examiner recognising him, said, "I am sure you bought a ticket. Don't worry about it."

"You are very generous," said the professor, "but I must find it, otherwise, how do I know where to get off?"

M. Kadambari, Chennai.

One day Sister let Chee-Chee out of the box. She placed it on her shoulder and was delighted to see that it did not run away. Chee-Chee looked left and right and ran up and down Sister's shoulders. There was hardly a trace of a limp. The leg was healing nicely.

"Don't let Chee-Chee out!" shouted Brother. He did not want it to run away. He grabbed it and held it tightly. "Chee! Chee!" squeaked the squirrel. It did not want to be squeezed, even out of love!

In came Papa Undir. He heard the squeaks and wanted to investigate. What a sight met him! Brother on his bed squeezing the poor squirrel! Sister standing nearby trying to stop him. A shoe box of rags with left over food. "What is going on?" he demanded.

Brother tried to stuff Chee-Chee back into the box in a feeble attempt at hiding. Sister knew the game was up. Papa called in Mama Undir. Mama did not say a word. She quietly took Chee-Chee from Brother and put it back in the box. Out came the story of the fallen baby squirrel and how it was much better now. "But it refuses to stay put now. If I open the box Chee-Chee will run away!"

"You two have done a reasonably good job of looking after a wounded squirrel. But now its leg is nicely healed. This is a creature happiest in the wild" said Mama.

"It's time to let go!" agreed Papa Undir.

So they opened the box and out jumped Chee-Chee. It walked up Brother's arm and looked at him with shining eyes as if to say, "Thanks a lot!" The Undir family took Chee-Chee outside. It ran up the banyan tree. Probably Chee-Chee still lives there.

Anuradha Khati

Subscription Form

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THE CIRCULATION MANAGER

GOKULAM (English)

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EKKADUTHANGAL, CHENNAI - 600 097.

PASSPORT

He had been in that border town for two days, waiting for his bosses to get his passport ready. They had put him up in a dingy room in a crowded street full of shops and wayside traders.

"The best way to hide is to be in a crowd" the big boss had told him. This boss was six feet two in his bare feet, with a beaked nose and a thick bristling moustache. When he spoke it was like the rumble of distant thunder. "No one will bother you here."

Most of the room was taken up by a camera on a tripod and a lot of dark room equipment.

"Yes. But how long should I hang around here?" he had asked.

"Take it easy" the boss said. "Haste makes waste, eh?"

"Delay means danger" he had said, sort of matching wits with the big man.

"Don't worry," the boss said. "Tomorrow the passport experts will start working on yours."

The next day the boss and two of his security men took him through a maze of crowded lanes where hawkers bawled out their wares and wayside stalls blocked almost the entire street. They reached a shabby tenement house, and climbed a rickety staircase until they reached the third floor, and entered a small, cluttered room. It had just one window high up. Most of the room was taken up by a camera on a tripod and a lot of dark room equipment. There were a couple of old wooden chairs.

On one of these chairs sat an enormously fat man. He had oily black hair combed back flat. Under this glossy top were a bulbous nose, bulging cheeks, and a series of chins that ended in a huge bulge above his collar.

"Ah! Here is our craftsman" said the boss, and the fat man rose chuckling until all his chins and cheeks quivered and jiggled.

The boss and the fat man embraced each other. The boss patted the fat man on the shoulders and the fat shook and shivered from neck to stomach.

The boss introduced the fat man to him. "This man here is the best passport artist ever. We just call him Ace. That is his code name."

Ace gripped his hand and chuckled. It was like giving one's hand to a cement grinder. "Hi, Ace" he said.

"Hello, yourself" said Ace, and guffawed. The whole room seemed to shake.

Now I have to remember one more code name, he thought. There was Boss and his security men, Bow and Scrape. And now there was Ace.

"Okay, let's make a bee-yoo-tiful passport together" said Ace, grinning fit to split his cheek. "Sit down in this chair" said Boss, and he sat down on one of the wooden chairs.

Ace adjusted the camera and started fiddling around with a couple of lights on stands.

"Will this passport be alright?" he asked.

"A genuine Indian passport no less" said Boss.

"How about the checking in Mumbai airport?" he asked worriedly.

"No hassles" Boss said. "When Ace makes a passport, it will see you through to hell and back."

Ace chuckled.

"Don't underestimate our work" said Boss. "We always make everything foolproof."

"How do you do that?"

"Well, there was a road accident and the accident victim was charred to death as the fuel exploded. But his briefcase was thrown out before the blast."

"How is that?"

"There was a slight time lapse between the accident and the explosion. The man was trying to come out of the wreck. He threw his briefcase out and then tried to crawl out. Before that the car exploded. It was a taxi.

"The man and driver were killed on the spot. And we reached the spot before the police did."

Ace grinned broadly. "And what do you think we found in the briefcase?" he asked triumphantly.

"What?"

"A fine little Indian passport, that's what." Ace shrugged his shoulders and lifted his eyebrows. "And that's that!"

"But suppose they identify the man?"

"He was charred beyond recognition" the boss said. "Anyway, allow us to worry about all that. You are a bomb expert. You stick to that."

"Okay. No problem."

"There better not be. We are smuggling you in so that you can create havoc there."

"Don't worry. I will blast the whole country."

"That's the spirit" said the boss patting him on the back. "Now Ace will take your photograph."

Ace clicked several pictures. "The passport will be ready tomorrow" he said. His lips parted in a toothy smile as he raised his thumb up in the air.

"Thank you" he said.

The next day the boss handed over the passport and the air ticket to him.

The passport looked suitably old and well-used. The number and the name and other details were from the original passport, but the photograph was his.

"Remember, use only the name in the passport. Don't blurt out your real name anywhere" the boss warned him.

"Right."

"Now tell me, who are you?"

"T.P.K. Menon."

"Where do you come from?"

"Ernakulam."

"What are you?"

"A computer salesman."

"Good. You better learn something about computers, just in case someone asks you something."

"Okay."

"Well, best of luck. Your flight is early tomorrow morning. Once you reach the airport you will be on your own."

"Right. Thank you Boss."

They shook hands. And then the boss walked away very fast and disappeared in the crowd.

There was no hitch at the airport. The flight was uneventful, and very soon the plane was circling the Mumbai airport. It was a smooth landing.

And as he walked to the customs shed, his confidence soared. He stood in the queue very calmly.

When his turn came, the customs man hardly looked at him. Very quickly his passport was stamped and he was waved on.

Relief flooded his whole being and he moved towards the exit.

Three men in plainclothes stopped him.

"Is your name T.P.K. Menon?" one of them asked.

"Yes" he said.

"From Ernakulam?"

"Yes" he said. His lips were going dry.

"You left India last April?"

"Yes."

Suddenly the men became very tough.

"You are under arrest."

"Wh... what for?" he managed to ask.

"For the murder of your wife in March last year."

"You dodged us and left the country last time. But this time you can't escape us."

And the handcuffs were clamped down on his wrists.

JANAKAN

Fantastic facts

* Do you think it is possible to grow roasted potatoes? A crop was harvested in Natal, S. Africa. The sun's heat had been so intense that when the potatoes were dug

they were roasted and ready to eat!

* A girl in Montana, USA, has a name so long that it will not fit on her birthday cards. She is known as 'Snow Owl' for short, but her name is of 622 letters.

* The largest flower in the world is the Rafflesia. It measures 3 feet across and smells like rotten meat!

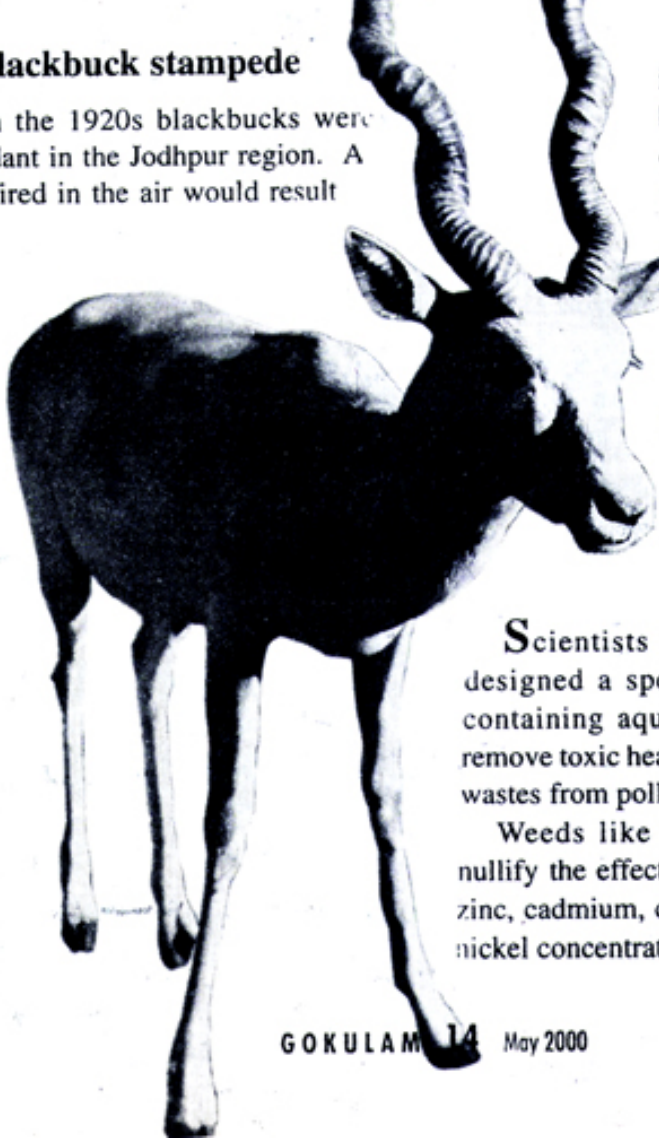
U. Varsha, age 12, GSSJV, Chennai.

WORLD AROUND YOU

AMAZING FACTS

Blackbuck stampede

In the 1920s blackbucks were abundant in the Jodhpur region. A shot fired in the air would result in a stampede of these bucks. It would take over an hour to clear the road. Large herds can still be found around Bishnoi villages. The Bishnoi hold the blackbucks sacred and resist their killing.



Weeds to control pollution

Scientists in Hyderabad have designed a special lagoon system containing aquatic weeds that can remove toxic heavy metals and organic wastes from polluted water bodies.

Weeds like water hyacinth can nullify the effects of large amounts of zinc, cadmium, chromium, copper and nickel concentrates in just two days.

Bullock power

Electricity can be generated using bullocks. In a village near Baroda electricity was generated using two pairs of sturdy bullocks. The electricity produced could power a submersible water pump in a 60 ft. deep bore and a flour mill.

The new device produces electricity rather cheap when compared to Solar Power or Wind Power and can be easily installed.

The new device requires a gear box, shafts, a dynamo and batteries. The equipment will cost very little if mass produced.

Bullocks remain under-utilised for most part of the year. They are used only for 90 days during the agricultural season. The animals have to be fed and maintained during the rest of the year.

The millions of bullocks and male buffaloes in the country could be utilised in power generation. They could produce 20,000 MW of power. India may then not face energy deficit.

Do you know?

1. Group of fish —
2. Group of monkeys —
3. Group of wolves —
4. Group of elephants —
5. Group of whales —
6. Group of birds —
7. Group of flowers —
8. Group of kangaroos —
9. Group of female deer —
10. Group of islands —

C.S. Archana, Std. II, ACST, Junis.

Dear Archana, pl. send your Indian contact address.

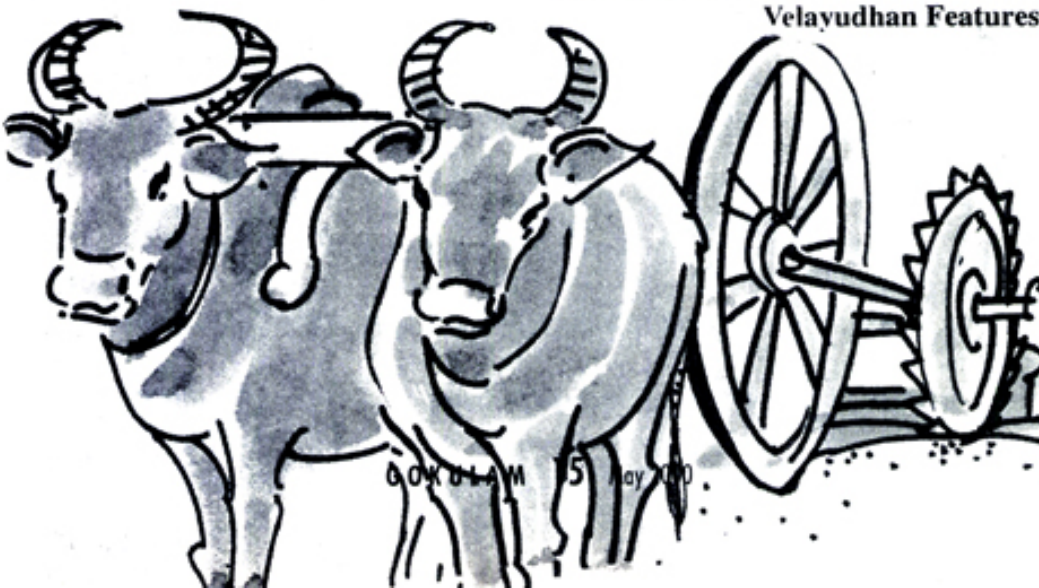
Ans : 1. School, 2. troop, 3. pack, 4. herd, 5. pod, 6. flock, 7. bunch , 8. mob, 9. hind, 10. archipelago.

Keeping rats away

Tribal farmers in a village in Gujarat have a novel way of keeping away rats from wheat crop.

They cultivate sunflower with wheat. The sunflower plant attracts a species of owl. The owl perches on the sturdy stems of flowers and feeds on the rats moving in the field.

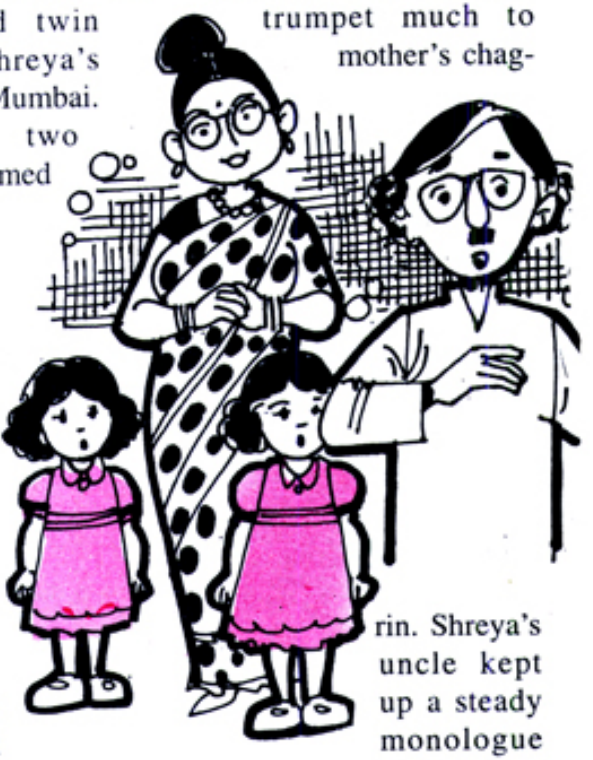
Velayudhan Features



AUNT'S FAMILY

The postman shouted, "post". Shreya was on her feet immediately. She brought the letter to her mother and asked her to read it. Shreya and her mother were very disappointed with the news.

Shreya's aunt was visiting them with her husband and twin children. Shreya's aunt lived in Mumbai. She had two terrible twins named Nikitha and Vinita. Niki and Vini, as Shreya referred to them were not what she had expected in the first week of her summer hols. She ran to inform her sister about the disaster that was to befall them. Sheetal, Shreya's sister too was disappointed.



The next two days were spent cleaning the house and preparing for the arrival of the aunt's family. Shreya's father received them at the railway station. The two girls were very uncomfortable when they eyed the twins. The entire household had dinner and the twins went to bed soon after dinner since the long train journey from Mumbai to Calcutta had tired them considerably.

But Shreya's parents did not have a lucky escape. Shreya's aunt began blowing her own trumpet much to mother's chagrin. Shreya's uncle kept up a steady monologue about the Indian political scenario, until father stifled a huge yawn. He said he was really tired and needed to rest.

The girls had to share their bedroom with

the visiting twins. Little did they realise that it was going to be a long night. Shreya and Sheetal were edged out of their beds. Finally, the two

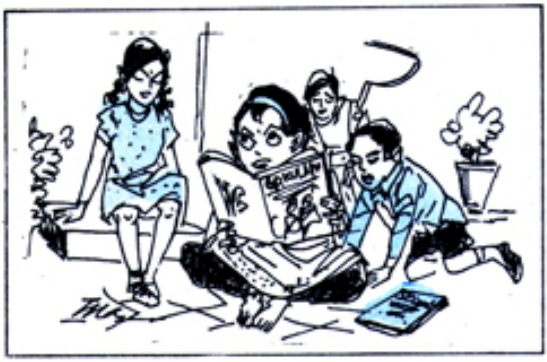
older girls took refuge in the divan in the hall and spent whatever was left of the night huddled together. The snores of their uncle in the other room made sleeping impossible. The next morning the girls appeared bleary eyed. When the twins suggested that they would play in the garden Shreya and Sheetal were pleased. Instead of playing in the garden, the twins trampled on mother's flowerbeds. As a result most of her flowering plants lay uprooted. Mother was really very angry.

The twins had no regard for books or magazines either. They tore off pages from magazines and made boats out of them. Shreya's father was enraged when he saw that the twins had messed up his favourite magazines.

By the end of the week, the twins had damaged Sheetal's make-up kit. Everyone in Shreya's family wanted the visiting family to leave as soon as possible. Shreya's father devised a plan to make the family leave the very next week. He entertained the twins' father with all news bulletins that were telecast on TV.

Shreya's mother served under-cooked food during the next three days. Shreya and Sheetal entertained the twins to a variety of horror movies.

Before the end of the second week of their arrival, Shreya's aunt and her children had



CAN YOU ANSWER THESE?

1. What is the difference between a locomotive engineer and a teacher?

2. What did one eye say to the other?

3. At this moment everyone in the world is doing the same thing. What is it?

4. What is too much for one, just right for two, but nothing for three?

5. How can you spell a mouse trap in three letters?

6. Why do we sing hymns in church and not hers?

7. Why was the tooth all dressed up?

8. Why did the teacher wear dark glasses?

9. Who were the first people to invent a plane that couldn't fly?

10. Where does Thursday come before Wednesday?

11. What is always coming but never arrives?

12. How can you drop a pizza 10 feet without breaking it?

J. Bharath, age 12,
Don Bosco MHSS, Chennai.

Dear Bharath, pl. send your house address.

Answers : 1. One minds the train, the other trains the mind; 2. There's something between us that smells; 3. Getting older; 4. A secret; 5. Cat; 6. Because they all end in amen and not women; 7. Because the dentist was taking it out that night; 8. Because the class was bright; 9. The wrong brothers; 10. In the dictionary; 11. Tomorrow; 12. Drop it 11 feet and it won't break for the first 10 feet.

visited the nearby dispensary twice. They complained of severe stomach ache. Shreya's uncle found the constant barrage of news bulletins irksome.

He decided that the visit to Calcutta should end immediately. When Shreya's aunt's family boarded the train back to Mumbai that Sunday, Shreya's family heaved a huge sigh of relief. That Shreya's mother and Sheetal suffered a bout of tummy upset because of undercooked food did not bother them.

There was only one long-term change following the visit by Shreya's aunt. Shreya's father became an ardent lover of politics. He now discussed politics like a man possessed. Shreya's mother is trying to find a remedy for this malady.

M. Shilpa, age 14,
National HS, Bangalore.

THE BICYCLE RIDE

Murali was eight years old. His father had gifted him a bicycle for his birthday. Close to Murali's house was a hillock. Murali's vacations had just begun.

He told his mother, "Mother I'll go for a ride on that hillock." Murali's mother refused him permission. But, Murali's mind was made up.

The rocks had been broken down and an unpaved road led up to the peak of the hillock. Murali had seen some cyclists venture to the hillock.

That afternoon, when his mother was taking her siesta Murali sneaked out of the house. He had just reached the rough mud road. The trip had tired Murali considerably and he decided to rest. It was too hot to ride any further. He stopped pedalling and slowed down.

Murali didn't notice a large rock that had broken loose from the hillock and fallen on the road. The front wheel of the bicycle hit the rock and Murali was thrown off the cycle. Murali lost consciousness.

When he regained consciousness, he found himself in a hospital. His mother was by his side. He remembered how his mother had warned him against the ride. Had he listened to his mother he'd not have hurt himself.

He promised his mother that he would respect her words. He spent most of his holidays in bed, recovering from the fall. But he also made good use of the time by reading books by his favourite authors. His mother was pleased.

V.K. Balakrishna, age 12,
A.G. Church School, Durgapur.

Here are the other three prize winning entries in the contest announced in Feb. 2000.

WE DON'T NEE

Not state specific

Water is essential for life. Is it not necessary to preserve water? Our ancestors lived close to rivers. As people ventured further in search of better livelihood, they learnt to harness water by constructing dams across the rivers. They sent water through canals to all needy places.

India's progress depends on agricultural development. About 5,00,000 villages are dependent on agriculture and its allied activities, directly and indirectly.

It is time we considered the entire country as a state.

Crops fail if monsoon fails. So, we need to store water.

During floods, nearly 90 percent of the water goes to the sea. This can be avoided if we build dams.

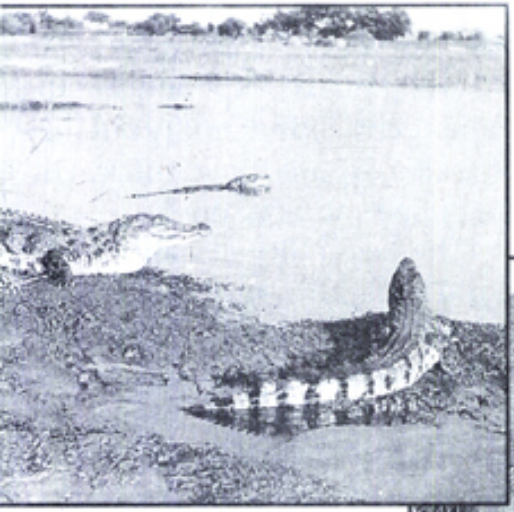
• Wildlife is often the first casualty when ecology is not considered while building dams.

Generally dams are constructed for the benefit of a particular state. It is time we considered the entire country as a state. We must construct dams at all vulnerable points and channalise the water by integrating all rivers. It will accelerate our country's economic growth.

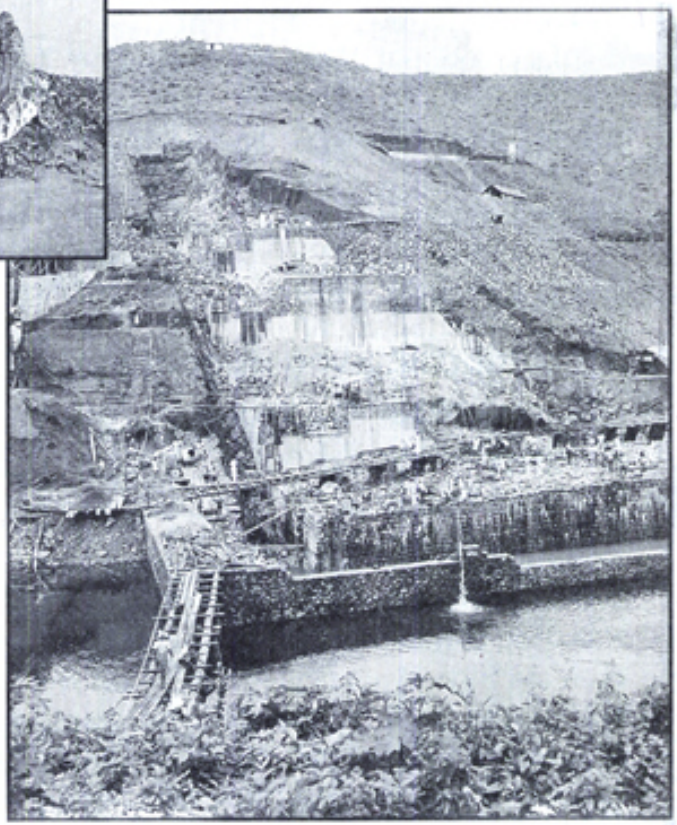
Dams are expensive. We invest crores of rupees in constructing a single dam. The ecology is affected as many villages and forests are submerged. If by accident a dam gives in, we may incur unimaginable loss of wealth and human life. Dams cause earth quakes which affect the country's

DAMS

Nature cannot be overpowered. It will lead to destruction. Dams can provide short bursts of energy, but they are not sustainable. Production often rises but huge systems lead to water logging and spread of water-borne diseases. Dams progress adversely.



* The lower depths of reservoirs contain less oxygen and are unsafe for aquatic life.



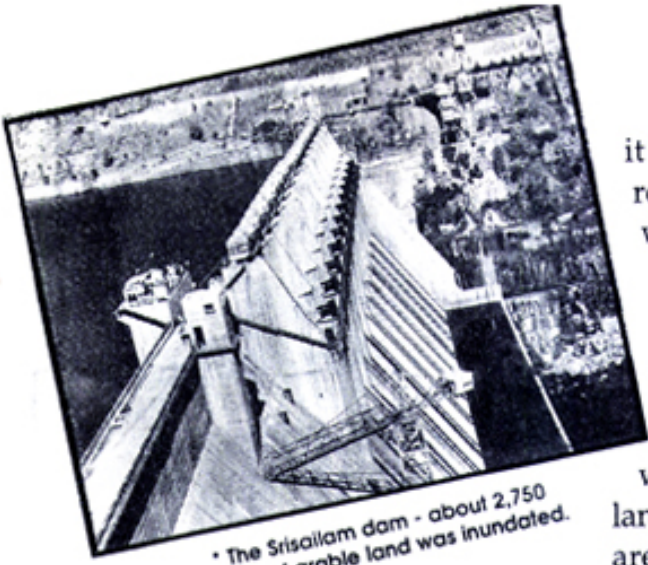
* The past should not be a hindrance to a bright future.

We must take all precautions before constructing dams.

V.K. Ramya, Std. IX,
Little Angels School,
Karur.

We don't need dams

Water is a natural gift. It is not proper to harness it. Big dam projects are not problem-solvers. In fact, they often create problems. disrupt the natural flow of water and therefore, have a negative impact on our natural eco-systems.



• The Srisailam dam - about 2,750 sq.km. of arable land was inundated.

In India, there are limited alternative sites for the resettlement of displaced people. They lose their cultural history and their distinctive identity. The Sri Sailam project inundated an area of 2750 square km. of arable land, taking away the livelihood of 1,00,000 farmers.

Decomposing vegetation make reservoir water unsafe for drinking.

The Balina dam in Brazil had 26 times more impact on global warming than an equivalent coal-fired station. Water in the reservoirs is affected by the decomposition of vegetation. Noxious gases are released, making it unsafe for drinking. Still water contains less oxygen in the lower depths of reservoirs making it uninhabitable for aquatic life. Mercury contamination occurs as it leaches into the water from rocks and soil. Proliferation of water weeds causes waterloss.

Silt accumulation reduces the capacity and efficiency of dams drastically. Coastal areas face erosion as a consequence of deposition of silt in wrong places. Not only are the lands deprived of fertility but they are also exposed to life-threatening floods and cyclones.

The possibility of dam bursts, landslips and seismi-city is a major risk. Dams eliminate downstream flooding cycles. They alter water chemistry, discharge and sediment behaviour. They block the migration of fish. All these aspects must be taken into consideration before planning construction of any dam.

S.S. Shyamsundar, Std. VII,
VMJ School, Madurai.

Forget the past

The primary requirement for development is energy. Initially man depended on readily available sources such as coal for his energy demands. He realised that too much dependence on these exhaustible resources could prove fatal to his development. He looked to natural resources like solar energy, wind power and

water. Wind power was found to be too unreliable while solar power could not be utilised for supplying high amounts of energy. Water was an unlimited and reliable energy source.

Man stored river water in ponds or tanks for irrigation. He built canals channelising the river water to his fields. He later found that water could provide electrical energy as well. Man constructed artificial barriers which came to be called dams.

Water from the stored reservoirs were passed through hydraulic turbines to provide electricity to houses and factories. Uniform release of water from dams prevents soil erosion and flooding of valleys.

Large dams mean harnessing large quantities of water.

The rise in water level will submerge villages located near the dam sites. If the government can provide these people with alternate means of livelihood, then why not proceed with the construction of dams?

Ancient relics can be removed to a safer place. Why should the past be a hurdle in the path of a bright future? Development is the basis of human survival. Dams are the key to our development.

P.R. Arun, age 15,
Christ Nagar School,
Trivandrum.

IT'S QUIZ TIME

a) Who changed his capital from Mysore to Srirangapatna?

b) Who brought Annie Besant to India as his follower?

c) What is the mother tongue of Queen Victoria?

d) Which is the biggest city in Arctic Circle?

e) Who was the philosopher and teacher of Alexander?

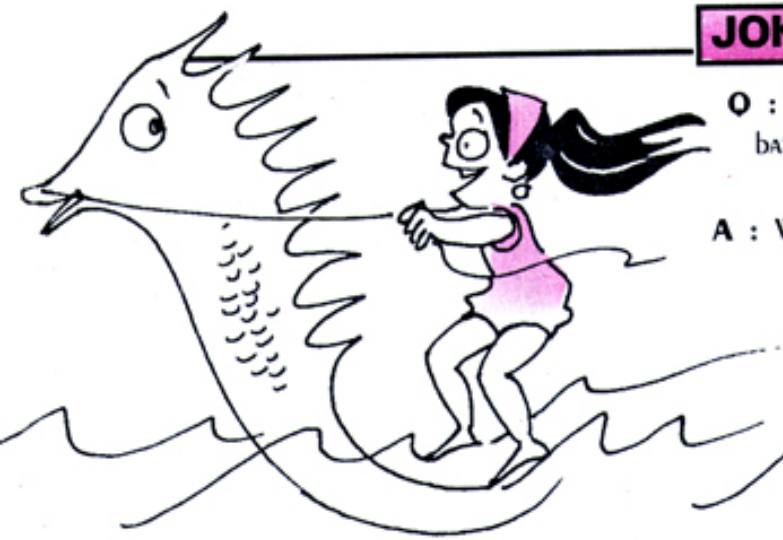
f) Name the four brave heroes of the Kaurava's camp who lived after the 'Mahabharata War'?

g) Which was the first series, India won under the captaincy of Sachin Tendulkar in one-day international and a test match?

C.N. Kiran, Tumkur, Karnataka.

Answer : a) Tipu Sultan; b) Swamy Vivekananda; c) Italian; d) Peartland; e) Aristotle; f) Vidhura, Dhritharashtra, Ashwathama & Hrishiketu; g) Gavaskar-Border Cup (test series v/s Australia in Bangalore.

JOKES CORNER



Q : When should you wear a bathing suit to go for horse riding?

A : When you are riding a sea horse

All jokes by R. Balajee, Chennai

An old man who flew for the first time was disembarking from the plane. He said to the pilot, "Thank you for both rides."

"What are you talking about?" the pilot asked. "You had only one ride."

"I beg your pardon," the man replied. "I had two rides - my first and my last."

An aeroplane was about to land. A stewardess handed out cotton packs.

"What are these for?" asked Ivan.

"They're for your ears, to prevent unpleasant pressure as we descend," the stewardess said.

After the plane landed, she asked Ivan - "Did the cotton plugs help?"

"Not really," grumbled Ivan. "I can't get them out of my ears."

A boy wrote this letter from camp.

Dear mom and dad,

GueSS what I need? PleaSe Send Some Soon. BeSt wiShes!

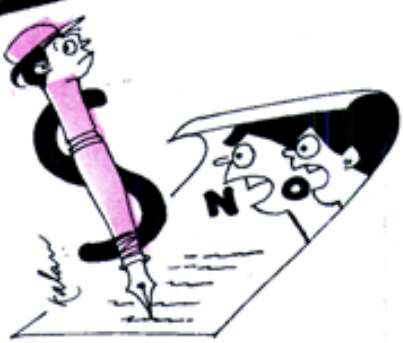
Your Son, Sammy.

His parents wrote back - Dear Sammy,

NOthing much is happening here. Please write aNOther letter. Bye for NOw.

Love,

Mom and dad.



THIMMAKKA'S TREES

Bikkalu Chikkaiah and Thimmakka had no children. They decided to devote their life to growing saplings. The impoverished couple were labourers in a quarry. The couple chose a tree-less three kilometre stretch on the Kudu-Hulikal state highway in Bangalore district.

Everyday, before going to work, they dug pits on both sides of the road and planted banyan saplings. They put up guards to keep off cattle from grazing their tender plants.

On returning from the quarry after work, the couple watered the plants. Water had to be fetched from a well nearly a kilometre away from the plants. The couple planted 284 saplings along the route. Almost all of them flourished under their tireless care.

Forty years later, the trees border the three- kilometre stretch. Their timber alone is estimated at Rs. 30 lakhs. The impact of the trees on the ecology and local climate is priceless.

Thimmakka and her husband received a small plot of land beside the national citizens award in recognition of their services. Thimmakka's husband died in 1996.

Water had to be fetched from a well far off.

Thimmakka is now seventy. She continues her good work. She is building tiny mud barrages across streams. These will help thirsty cattle. Thimmakka takes time off to visit her banyan trees even today.

Pallavi Prasad, age 15, Nightingales HS, Bangalore.

BUDDY, THE BUTTERFLY

Often father took me with him on his walks. The early morning walks were full of fun. Father would explain everything about nature to me.

One day as we walked down a calm road, we came across a plant. My eyes dwelt upon a large green fruit. It was hanging from a leaf.

I said to father, "Look isn't that fruit beautiful? And it is hanging from a leaf."

Father looked at it keenly. He is a lepidopterist. He shook his head and said, "It is the pupa of a butterfly."

"Can I take it home? I will take care of it till it becomes a butterfly. I shall call it Buddy."

Father laughed. For he knew that at this stage, the pupa didn't require any care, except that it should be carried home gently.

Everyday I looked at the pupa. I had placed it in the balcony of my house. Mother has a row of potted plants in the balcony.

It was a Sunday. I was looking through the atlas when mother called me. I ran into the balcony. There before my eyes, I saw the butterfly emerge from its cocoon.

It had deep yellow wings with black and white spots. The butterfly was small. Its antenna fluttered in the wind and then the butterfly took off. I picked up the empty cocoon and placed it in a match box. I treasure it still.

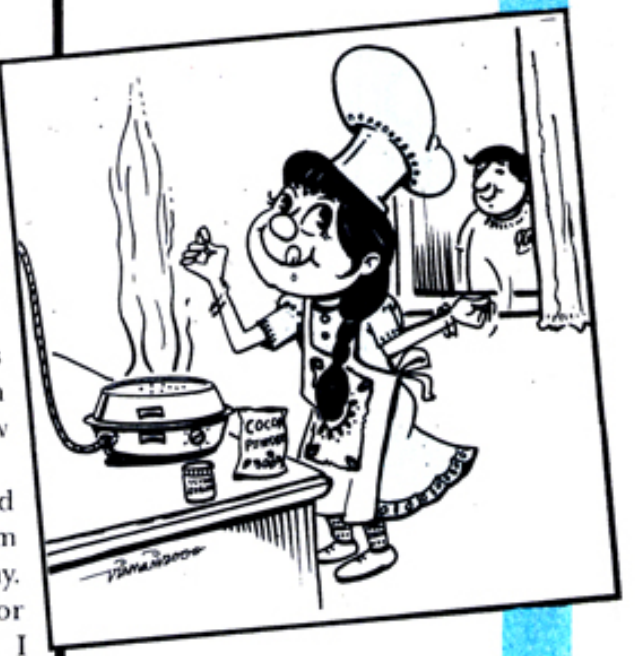
Buddy returned a few minutes later. It sat on the leaf of a croton plant for sometime and then flew away.

It was as if he had remembered that he had metamorphosed from a pupa to a butterfly on our balcony.

Since then I keep a watch for caterpillars in the gardens I visit. I would very much love to have a caterpillar for a pet. For then, I can watch it metamorphose into a pupa and then into a butterfly.

Everytime I see a butterfly I am reminded of Buddy.

S. Alph Shirley,
St. Joseph's HSS, Nagercoil.



BUDDING CHEF

CHOCOLATE BISCUITS

Ingredients:

100 gm icing sugar or powdered sugar
100 gm grated chocolate
1 tsp flour
White of egg
Vanilla essence

Method :

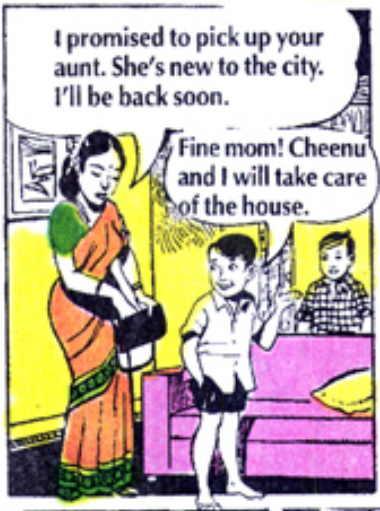
Sift the sugar and mix it with chocolate and flour, then add the flavouring and enough beaten white of egg to make a paste. Take small portions of the mixture, form into balls, and arrange on a buttered baking tin, placing them some distance apart. Bake in a moderate oven for about 15 minutes.

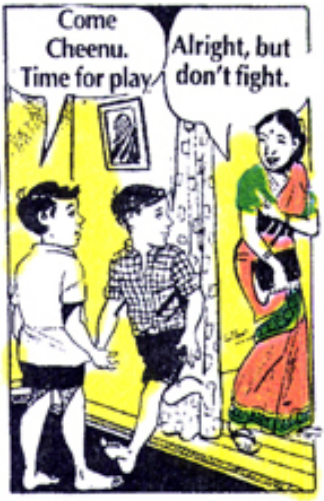
L. Sheeba, age 15,
Sanjose MS, Mettupalayam.

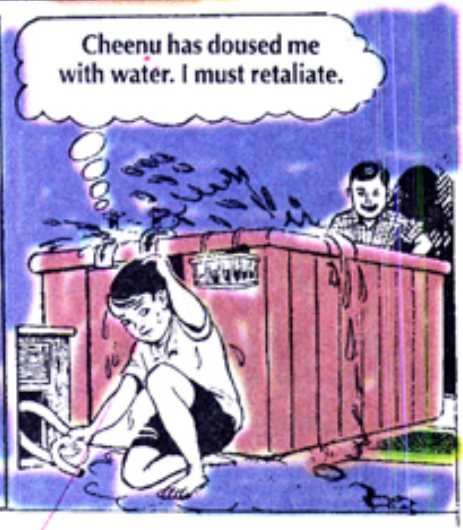
A COOL BATH

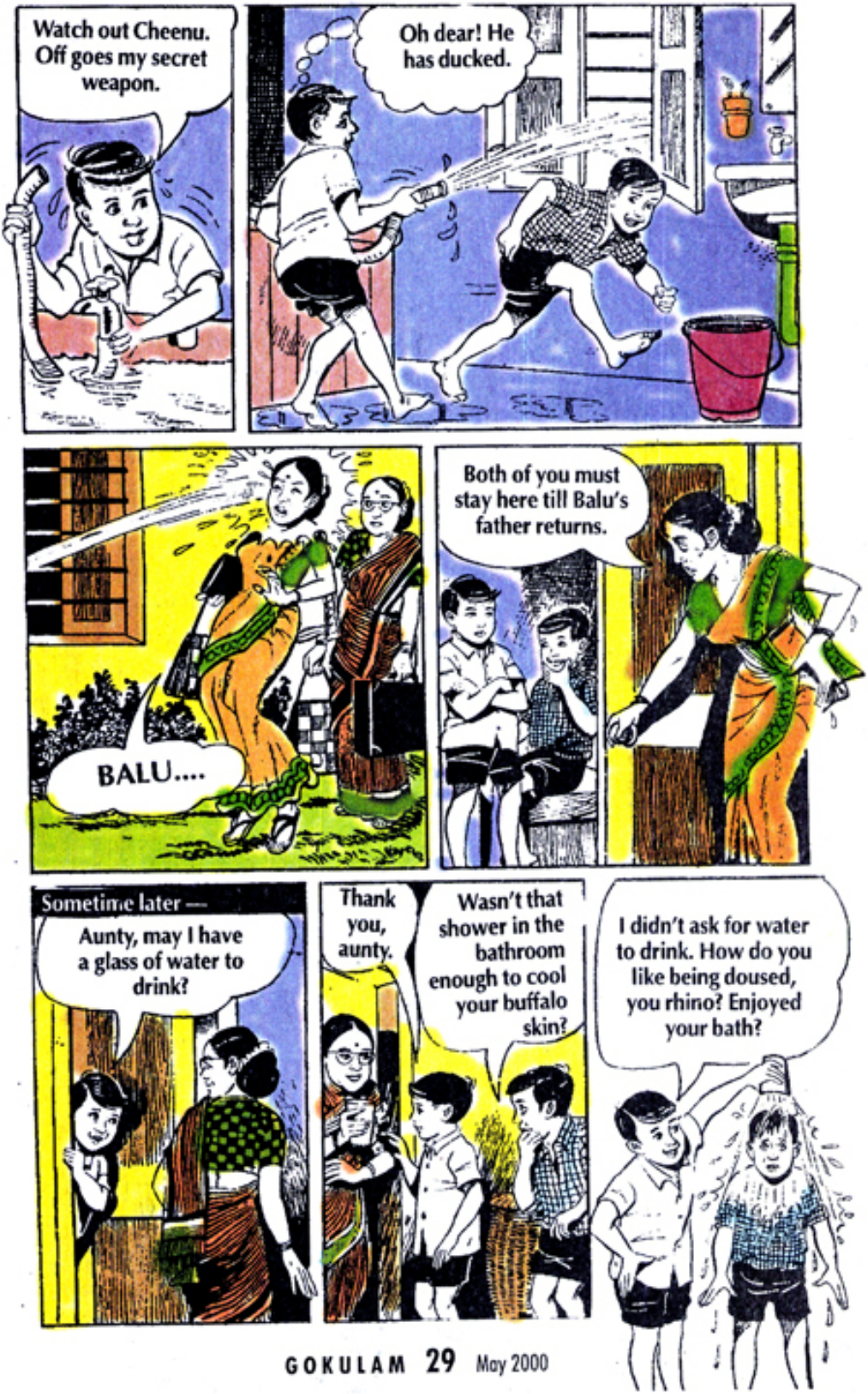
Story : Kausikan

Illustration : Chellappan








Watch out Cheenu. Off goes my secret weapon.
Oh dear! He has ducked.
BALU....
Both of you must stay here till Balu's father returns.
Sometime later —
Aunty, may I have a glass of water to drink?
Thank you, aunty.
Wasn't that shower in the bathroom enough to cool your buffalo skin?
I didn't ask for water to drink. How do you like being doused, you rhino? Enjoyed your bath?

SNIP

100 always

Lakerudolph is a small island of Kenya. Whatever the number of births and deaths may be, the island always maintains its population exactly at 100.

Music Clinic

Nachiokosign, a doctor in Tokyo, cures his patients with music, in his "Music Clinic". He claims to have cured many patients of high B.P., arthritis and hysteria.

Around the world

The first voyage round the world was made in the Spanish ship Victoria in 1519 - 22. The captain was the famous explorer, Ferdinand Megallan.

Costly house

Dymlar Benz, an industralist, paid $50 lakhs for the old house of Margaret Mitchell, the author of the famous novel, "Gone with the Wind".

First of sorts

Jack Johnson was the first African to win the world heavyweight championship. He defeated the reigning champion, Tommy Burns, in 1908. In 1910, he also

Pa
co
by

ETS

efeated James Jeffries, who ame out of retirement to teach ohnson a lesson.

First book

The first book to be printed in Europe was the Gutenberg Bible.

Operation happy!

Gavaret Wishoff, 42, of Frankfurt, Germany, has so far undergone 142 operations. He has spent 700 hours on the operation table.

Lucky pet

Ava Gardner, the famous Hollywood actress, left a trust fund of everal million dollars, her mansion and ersonal maid, to her dog, Morgan.

M.V. Naidu,
Hyderabad.

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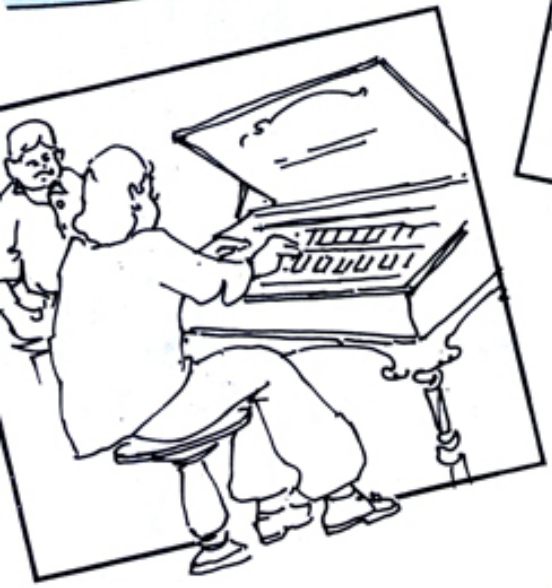
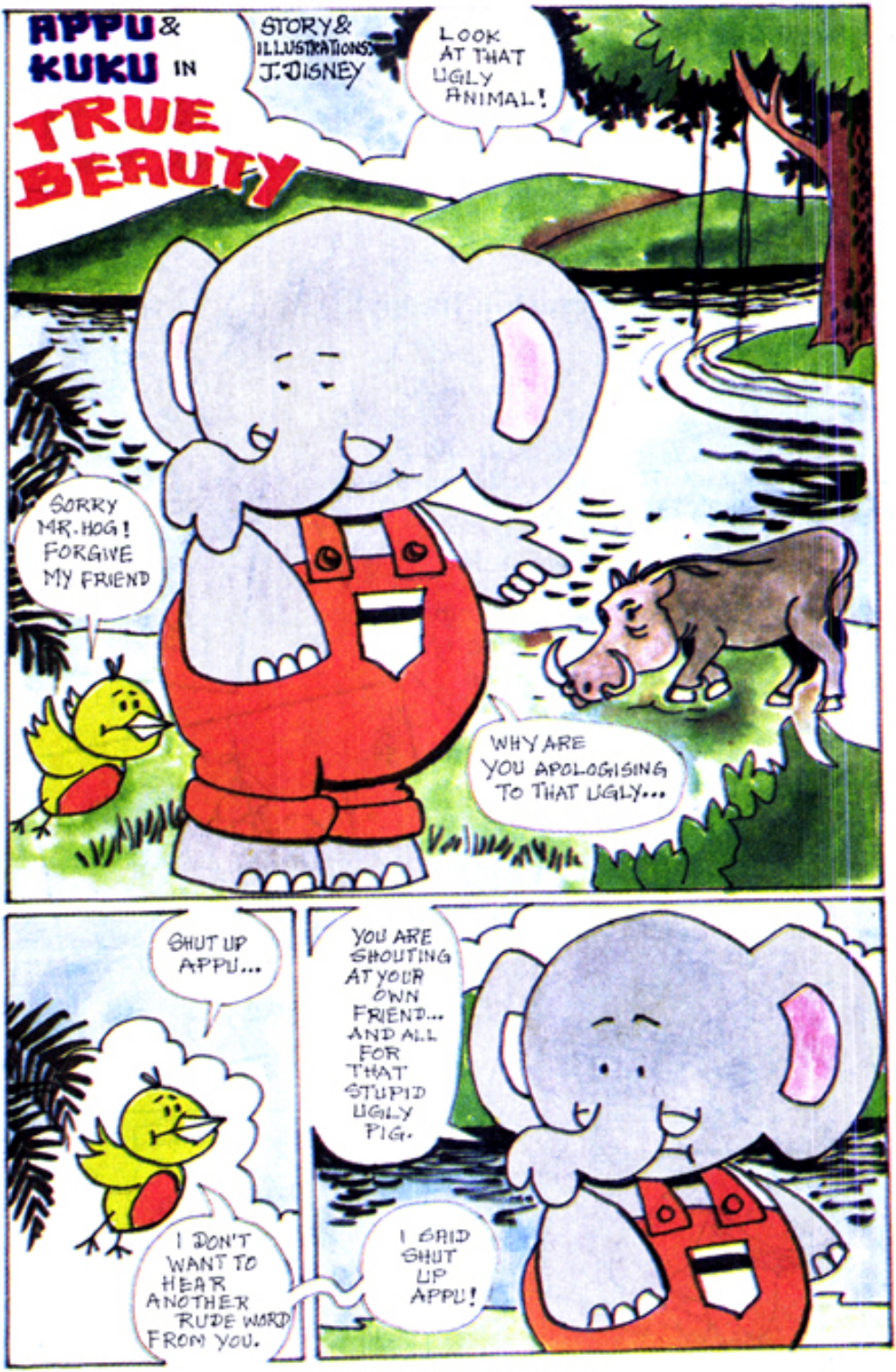
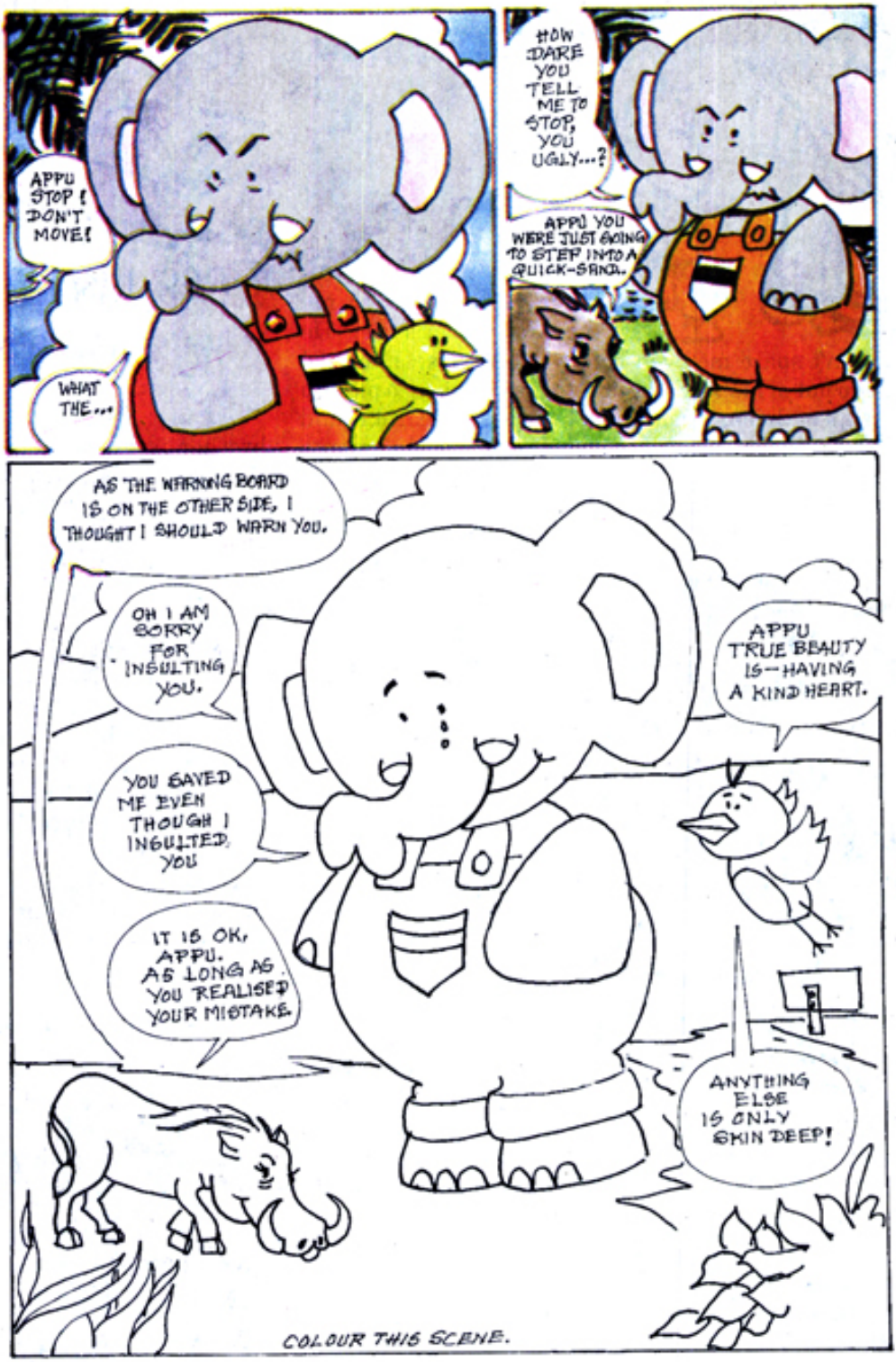



APPU & KUKU IN
TRUE BEAUTY
STORY & ILLUSTRATIONS: J. DISNEY
LOOK AT THAT UGLY ANIMAL!
SORRY MR. HOG! FORGIVE MY FRIEND
WHY ARE YOU APOLOGISING TO THAT UGLY...
SHUT UP APPU...
YOU ARE SHOUTING AT YOUR OWN FRIEND... AND ALL FOR THAT STUPID UGLY PIG.
I DON'T WANT TO HEAR ANOTHER RUDE WORD FROM YOU.
I SAID SHUT UP APPU!


APPU STOP! DON'T MOVE!
WHAT THE...
HOW DARE YOU TELL ME TO STOP, YOU UGLY...?
APPU YOU WERE JUST GOING TO STEP INTO A QUICK-SAND.
AS THE WARNING BOARD IS ON THE OTHER SIDE, I THOUGHT I SHOULD WARN YOU.
OH I AM SORRY FOR INSULTING YOU.
YOU SAVED ME EVEN THOUGH I INSULTED YOU
IT IS OK, APPU. AS LONG AS YOU REALISED YOUR MISTAKE.
APPU TRUE BEAUTY IS—HAVING A KIND HEART.
ANYTHING ELSE IS ONLY SKIN DEEP!
COLOUR THIS SCENE.

GRANDMA WORM

My brother who's three years older to me constantly teases me. He doesn't spare me even before his friends. Even if I keep out of his way he finds an opportunity to pick up fights with me. The teasing becomes unbearable and I begin to cry though I am not a crybaby. My parents have spoken to him. It has had no effect.

G.M. Preethi, age 13, Bangalore.

Dear Preethi,

Take the matter into your hands. Ignore your brother everytime he picks up a fight. Ignore him and his friends when they tease you. He'll get the message after two or three such episodes.

My mother wants me to help her with her chores at home. I have to help her on return from school. I can't concentrate on studies after that. So I go off to play. I become tired and can't study. I can just about finish my homework.

G. Roopa, Std. VII, AEC School, Mysore.

Dear Roopa,

Tell your mother that household work tires you. Take on a less strenuous work like dusting. Tell your mother that you need to study for atleast two hours a day.

My 18-year old brother is over- protective. He is also demonstrative in public. Once he came to my school to deliver my lunch box. I had forgotten it at home. In front of the class he hugged me and kissed me on my cheek. The entire class and the teacher were in giggles. I was very embarrassed. I adore my brother and want to be adored in return but not in public. I have spoken to my parents about this. They have advised my brother to be restrained. He continues with his behaviour.

Rahul Shivshankar, Std. IX B,

Sarvodaya Vidhyalaya,
Trivandrum.

Dear Rahul,

You are lucky to have such a loving brother. Give your brother a bear hug in front of his friends whenever you get a chance. If he feels embarrassed, he'll ask you to put a stop to it. You can tell him then how he embarrasses you with his open show of affection. I'm sure he'll see reason and change his behaviour for the better.

Once I went to a shop to buy maps. The small shop near my house charged 0.75 paise for a map. At another shop the same map cost me 0.60 paise. Recently I bought a map from a better known shop. The shopkeeper charged me only 0.25 paise. What is the actual price of the map? Why

does the cost vary so much?

A. Soujanya,
age 12,
Chennai.

Dear Soujayna,

Buy your stationery needs from a reputed store. It is always advisable to take the help of your parents while buying things you need for school. They know best. They won't get cheated easily.

Love,
Grandma worm

TWO MEN IN A DOCTOR'S WAITING ROOM.

'I'M ACHING FROM ARTHRITIS' SAID ONE.

'I'M B.BENT FROM BIRMINGHAM' SAID THE OTHER, 'GLAD TO KNOW YOU'.

Teacher : (To parent on opening day) Yes, Mr. Aditya, I think your son will go down in history.
Mr. Aditya : Oh, really....
Teacher : Yes, and in English, Maths and Science.

Deepa. S., Std. XII, Chennai.

Q : Can you tell a word, in which five vowels come in a sequence?
A : Queueing!

N. Sabaresh, age 7,
Johnson Grammar School, Hyderabad.

DUNG BEETLES

Just as the name suggests these beetles thrive on dung. They are found all over southern Africa. They feed as a community. The common dung beetle is 1¾ inches long and weighs ¾ ounces. (1 ounce = 28.32 gms.)

Dung beetles are also known as scarab beetles. About 750 species of dung beetles are known. The common dung beetle is one of the larger varieties. It is easy to identify, as the upper portion of the wing case is flattened and dented. The wings look as though they have been crushed.

The middle and hind legs have well-developed, five-jointed feet, but the broad front legs end as if at the ankle.

Dung beetles seldom fly. When they do, they often hover around bushes. They are found in areas frequented by herbivores. The beetle is quick to detect fresh, green dung of a herbivore. Some smaller species of the beetle make dung balls beneath the dry dung pile. Others make no ball at all.

The common dung beetle makes large, tennis sized spheres of fresh dung. It smooths the ball with its paddle shaped front legs. The beetles then roll the huge balls, several times their size away from the dung source.

A huge pile of elephant droppings will contain several hundred dung beetles, all working towards making dung balls.

Dung beetles feed on fresh herbivore dung. If a dung beetle happens to live near farms then it feeds on the droppings of cattle and livestock.

The male dung beetle makes the "nuptial ball". The beetle rolls the ball away from dung source and uses it to attract the female. Once the male has attracted a female, the male buries the ball in sand. The male and the female beetle live inside the ball for three days. After they have mated, both beetles eat the ball.

Dung beetles don't fly. They merely hover over bushes.

Either the male or the female beetle prepare the "brood ball". This ball is also buried and the female lays a single oval white egg. Each egg is 1/8 inch long. The female seals the ball and moves away.

It repeats the process until all eggs are laid. The eggs hatch after a week. The larva devours the inside of the ball which remains fresh. The outer surface of the ball hardens, protecting the larva. After two or three weeks, the grub forms pupa. By now the dung ball is merely a hollow hard shell which protects the pupa. The grub remains a pupa until the next rainy season. With the rains, the new dung beetle emerges from its shell.

A dung beetle lives upto two years. Dung beetle larvae are a favourite food of the mangoose and civet. These animals often spend hours searching for the nest holes and digging them up.

THE DREAM

Once emperor Akbar had a dream. He dreamt that he had lost all of his teeth except one. The next day he called for his astrologers. He wanted them to decipher the dream for him.

The astrologers discussed among themselves and said, "Oh! King, all your relatives will die before you die! This is the meaning of the dream."

The king was very upset when he heard the interpretation of his dream. He wouldn't pay the astrologers for their service.

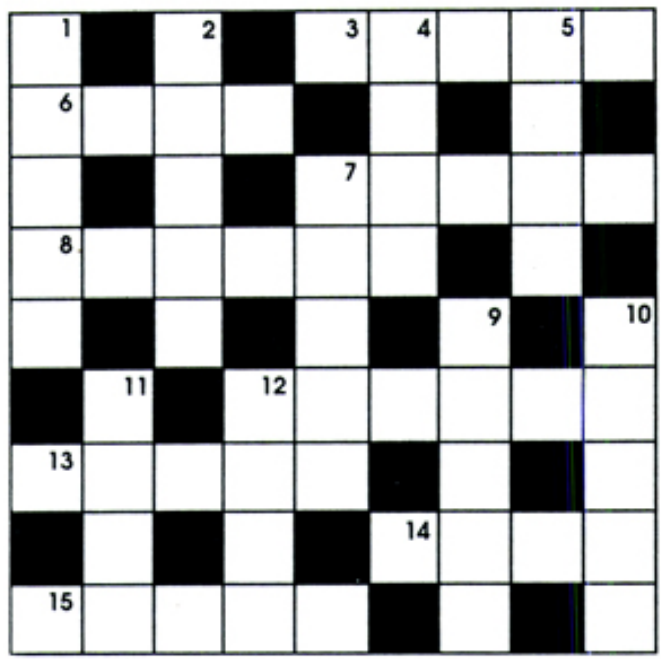
Sometime later Birbal arrived at the court. The emperor told him about his dream. Birbal thought for a while and then said, "Your majesty, you will live longer than all of your relatives. That is the meaning of the dream."

The emperor rewarded Birbal handsomely for now he felt reassured and happy!

G.J. Roopmathi, age 13, St. Gregorias School, N. Delhi.

PUZZLE

CROSSWORD PUZZLE



Clues across:

3. Telegram (5)
6. Attack (4)
7. Bed covering (5)
8. Make (6)
12. Catch phrase (6)
13. Piece of crockery (5)
14. Under garment (4)
15. Imprint (5)

Clues down:

1. Slightly damaged (5)
2. Stacked (5)
4. Pain (4)
5. Vegetable (4)
7. Fashion (5)
9. Girl's name (5)
10. Combine (5)
11. Even (4)
12. Check (4)

P. Uthara Priyadharshini, Std. VI, K.V., Chennai.

PAGE

Amazing Squares

Here's is a brain teaser. How many odd things did you notice in these two series?

This peculiarity is seen 10 numbers before and 10 numbers after every number divisible by 50. It is periodic. Can you find a simple equation for these series?

Case 1	Series 1	Series 2
$0^2 = 00$	$50^2 = 2500$	$50^2 = 2500$
$1^2 = 01$	$51^2 = 2601$	$49^2 = 2401$
$2^2 = 04$	$52^2 = 2704$	$48^2 = 2304$
$3^2 = 09$	$53^2 = 2809$	$47^2 = 2209$
$4^2 = 16$	$54^2 = 2916$	$46^2 = 2116$
$5^2 = 25$	$55^2 = 3025$	$45^2 = 2025$
$6^2 = 36$	$56^2 = 3136$	$44^2 = 1936$
$7^2 = 49$	$57^2 = 3249$	$43^2 = 1849$
$8^2 = 64$	$58^2 = 3364$	$42^2 = 1764$
$9^2 = 81$	$59^2 = 3481$	$41^2 = 1681$

S. Sivaramakrishnan, Std. XII A, TVS LMHSS, Madurai.

BRAIN TEASER

Seth Ramlal ordered his servant to go to the market and buy plates, tumblers and spoons. He gave the servant Rs. 20 and told him to buy exactly 20 articles. How many plates, tumblers and spoons will he buy if the cost of 1 plate is Rs. 5, 1 tumbler Re. 1, and 25 paise for 1 spoon? Also, he must buy atleast one article of each kind.

S. Shankar, age 13, PSSSS, Chennai.

Know your G.K.?

SOLUTION PAGE 47

1. Name the first European to invade India.
2. What is the study of stars called?
3. Where is the world's biggest palace situated?
4. What is the official name of West Germany?
5. To which country did Leanardo-da-Vinci, the great painter belong?
6. Name the father of Alexander the great?
7. Which is the largest Bay in the world?
8. An ordinary dozen contains twelve numbers. How much does a baker's dozen contain?
9. To which country did Joan of Arc belong?
10. Which dramatist is known as the 'Indian Shakespeare'?

K. Karpagam, age 13, Chavara Vidhya Bhavan, Coimbatore.

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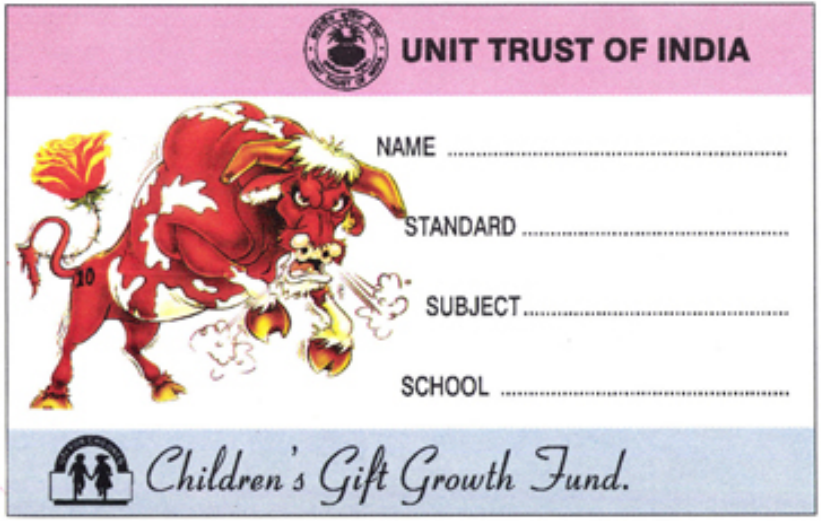
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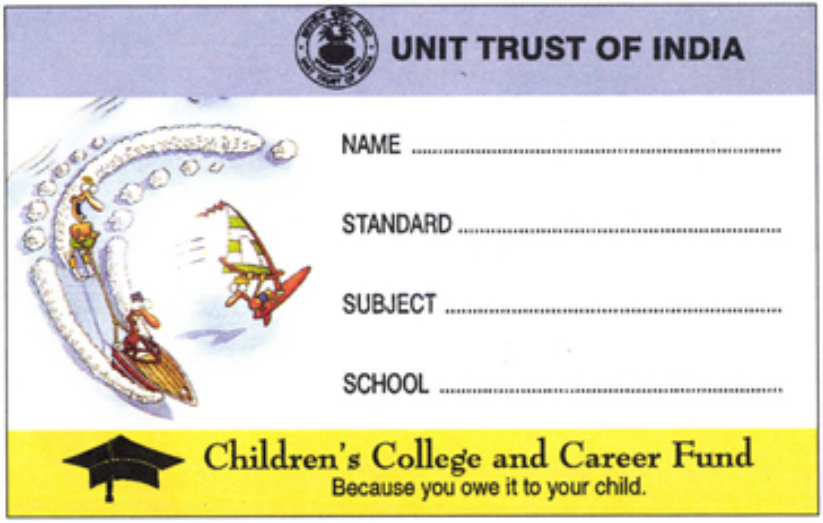
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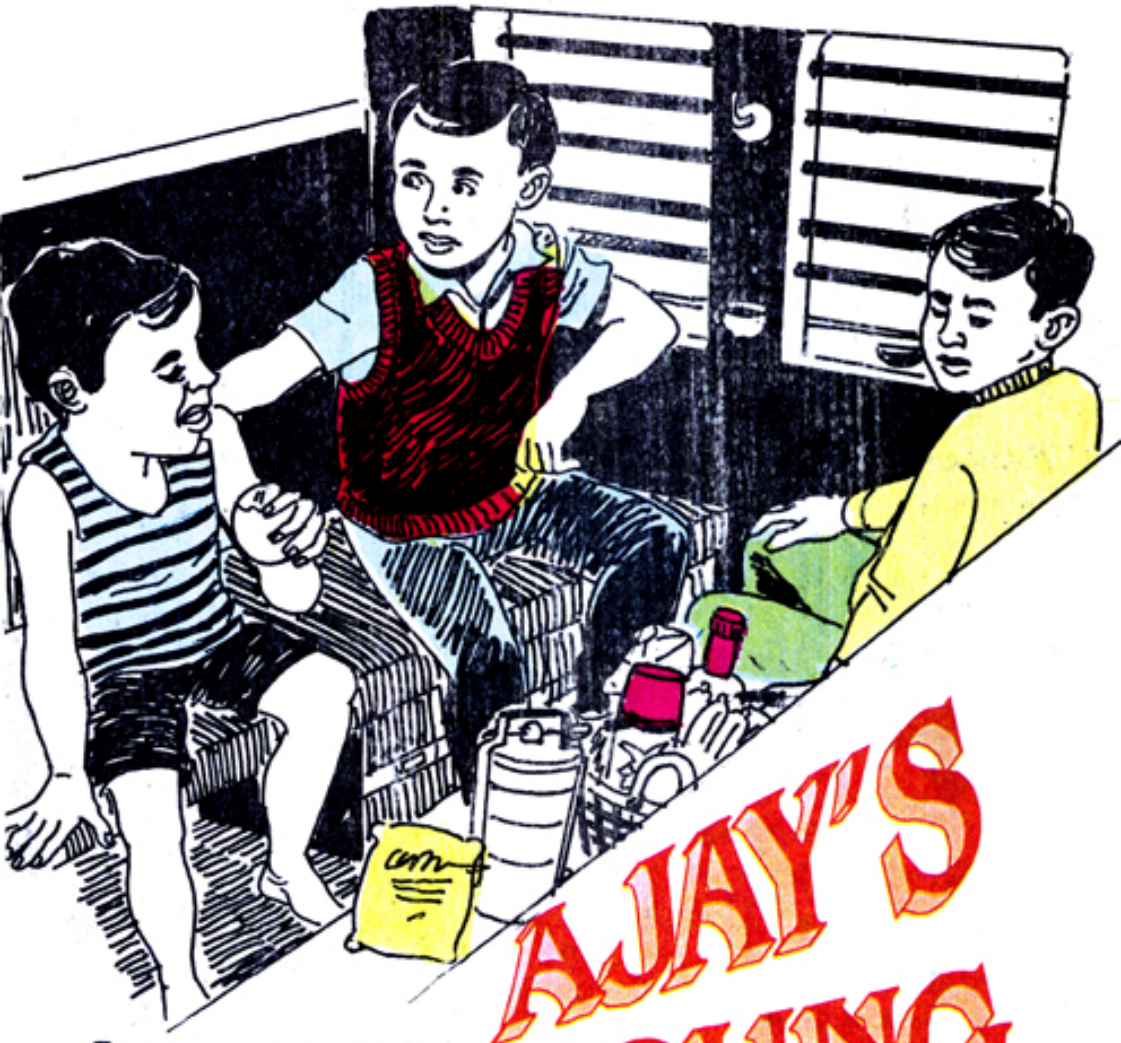


AJAY'S YOUNG FRIEND

Ajay and Sanjay studied in a convent in the city. Their school had closed for a week for Christmas. The boys decided to spend their vacation in Ajay's grandpa's farm. They boarded a train that evening. The boys took a window seat each and began munching chips. Just as the train moved out of the station, a shabbily dressed boy entered the compartment. The boy was smaller than them. The boy held out his hand for tidbits. Ajay handed the boy an apple.

It became apparent to him that the boy was a vagabond who travelled on trains living on the kindness of the travellers. Ajay asked the smaller boy where he lived. The boy burst

into tears saying that he travelled on trains hoping to earn the kindness of the people.

Ajay asked him to sit next to him. This angered Sanjay. He turned to the window and refused to join the other two boys in their merry-making. Soon, the train halted at a station. A large number of people boarded the train.

Ajay looked around at the other passengers. An elderly gentleman and his wife sat next to Sanjay. A middle-aged man with an ugly scar on his cheek sat next to them. Soon, everyone had gone to sleep.

The young boy decided to sleep on the floor of the compartment. Ajay gave him a bed sheet as the night was cold.

The compartment became silent as the train chugged into the night.

A noise woke Ajay. He noticed that the man with the ugly scar had tripped on the boy sleeping on the floor. He held in his hand Sanjay's luggage. The train hadn't stopped. The noise had woken up the elderly gentleman too. Ajay jumped down from his berth and fell on the thief. The young boy pummeled the thief on his back. The elderly gentleman pulled the alarm chain.

The TTR arrived. Ajay explained to the TTR all that had happened. The TTR had the man thoroughly checked. Soon, it was learnt that the man was a thief who had been giving the police the slip for a long time. The thief confessed to stealing Sanjay's luggage.

The TTR handed over the thief to the railway police at the next station. Sanjay was ashamed of his behaviour.

He asked the young boy to sleep next to him on his berth for the rest of the journey. The next day Ajay brought his new friend to grandpa's farm. Grandpa was impressed by the young boy's courage. He appointed him as an assistant to the chief farm hand. Grandpa also promised to send the boy to school.

J. Kamal Dhinakaran,
Erode.

Amazing squares

Here's an easy way to arrive at the squares of the numbers in series 1.

Suppose the first number of the square is X i.e. in $52^2 = 5 = X$ and $2 = Y$

$100 (5x + y) + y^2$. This equation when replaced with numbers will give you the answer.

Here's another peculiarity.

$x^2 + y$ = the first two digits of the square

The formula for the second series is —

$100 [(5x + y) - 5] + (10 - y)^2$

General quiz

1. Alexander the Great; 2. Astronomy; 3. Vatican City, 4. Federal Republic of Germany; 5. Italy, 6. Phillip II, 7. Hudson Bay; 8. Thirteen; 9. France; 10. Kalidas

Brain teaser

3 plates, 1 tumbler, 16 spoons.

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

C[1]		P[2]		C[3]	A[4]	B	L[5]	E
R[6]	A	I	D		C		E	
A		L		S[7]	H	E	E	T
C[8]	R	E	A	T	E		K	
K		D		Y		A[9]		U[10]
	F[11]		S[12]	L	O	G	A	N
P[13]	L	A	T	E		N		I
	A		E		V[14]	E	S	T
S[15]	T	A	M	P		S		E

Did you know?

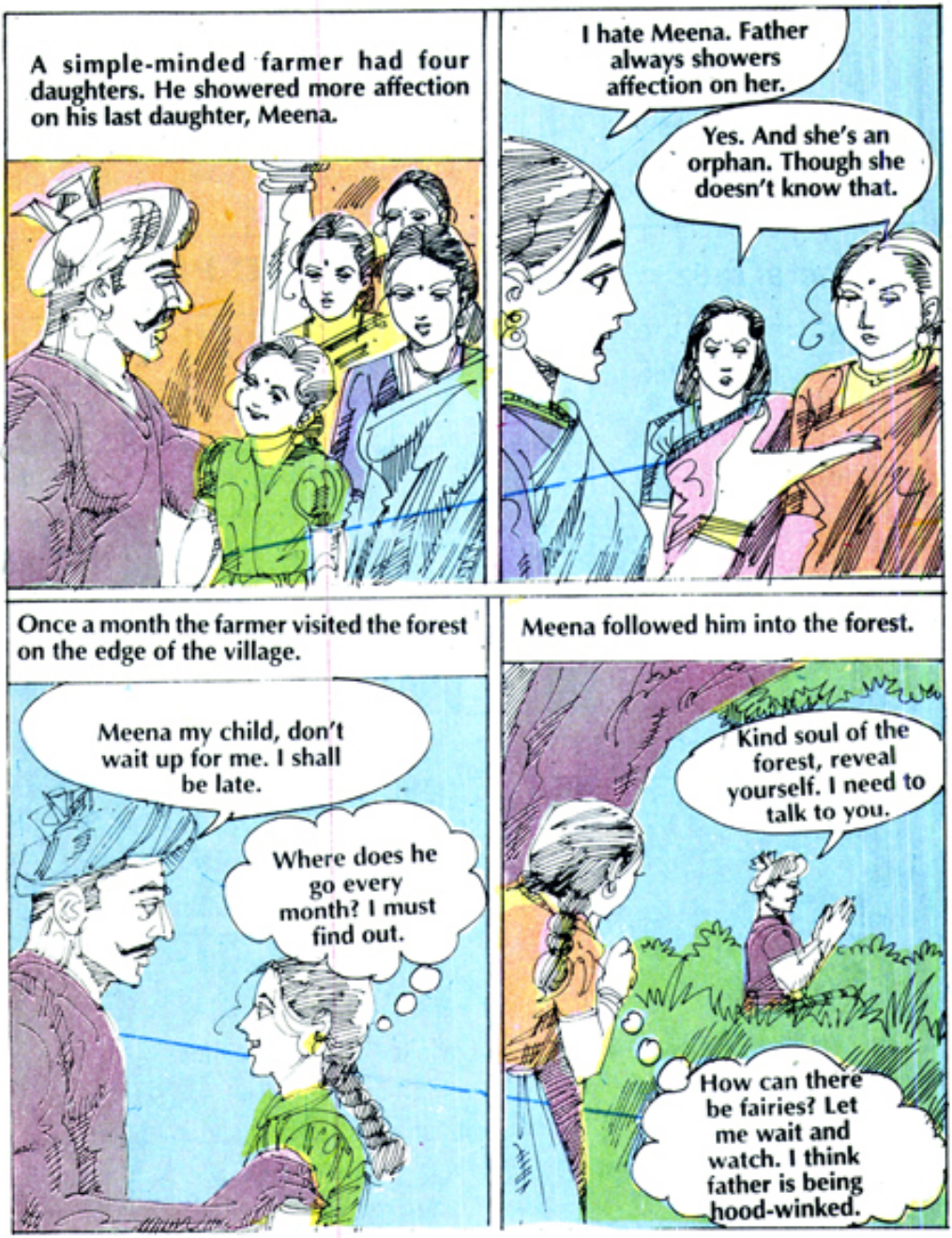
1. Kakapo is a green parrot.
2. Snubnosed monkey is found in China.
3. Cheetah is extinct only in India.
4. Monkey-eating eagles can be found in Philippines.

Anitha Sonia, age 14, Bangalore.

Dear Anitha, pl. send your house address.

ANGEL'S DAUGHTER

Story : V. Saran, Std. VIII B, St. Theresa's MS, Karur.
Illustration : SASI



A woman dressed as a fairy appeared before the farmer. Meena realised that it was a human being and not an angel.

Greetings to you. I came to see you.

Greetings. How is my daughter? I hope she is fine.

She's well and happy, angel. She's properly taken care of.

Thank you kind man. I know my child is in good hands.

The farmer bowed to the woman. He left the forest without looking back.

Next month, Meena went into the forest ahead of her father and without his knowledge. She said the same prayers. The angel appeared.

I know you are a human being. Why are you cheating the farmer?

Who are you?

I am the farmer's fourth child. I overheard your talk.

You are my child. I asked the farmer to bring you up because I had enemies and I feared for your life.

The woman told Meena why she had disguised herself.

The farmer is a simple man and I let him believe that I was a fairy.

Are you happy with him? Does he take good care of you?

Yes, but I am not happy. My sisters hate me.

Meena told her how she had overheard her sisters' conversation.

At the appointed time the farmer came to the forest in search of the angel. The angel met him.

My daughter shall live with me henceforth. Her sisters don't want her.

I am sorry about my daughters' behaviour. Meena was very special to me.

The woman told him how upset Meena had been when she arrived at the forest.

Thank you for taking care of my child. I want to reward you for your help.

But, I don't want any rewards.

All the same, you will need money so that you can get your daughters married.

The fairy also revealed that she was a woman in disguise and not a fairy.

You were a simple-minded farmer. I feared for my child's life. So, I pretended to be a fairy.

It doesn't matter who you are. To me you are an angel.

Take these jewels. They'll come in handy.

You can sell them and use the money as you please.

Iam glad that the danger to Meena's life is past. Take her and lead a new life. I am happy that I could be of some help to you.

GHOSTLY SCREAM

It was midnight. Vijay and his family were watching a horror movie. The film was about a young man who encounters a ghost and finally becomes a prey to the ghost.

Though the film did not scare Vijay, it was a long time before he went to sleep. Vijay and his family lived in a house built fifty years ago. The toilets were built away from the main building.

Vijay woke up with a start. He thought he heard a sound from somewhere within the house. He looked around the house searching for thieves. He decided to check the toilet too. As he approached the toilet he noticed a shadow on the wall. He turned back to see who was standing. There was no one by the wall. Suddenly Vijay tripped and fell. His head hit the wall. He screamed and became unconscious.

When Vijay regained consciousness, he found himself in a hospital bed. His head was swathed in bandage. His father smiled at him and said, "You are a brave boy. You prevented us from being robbed."

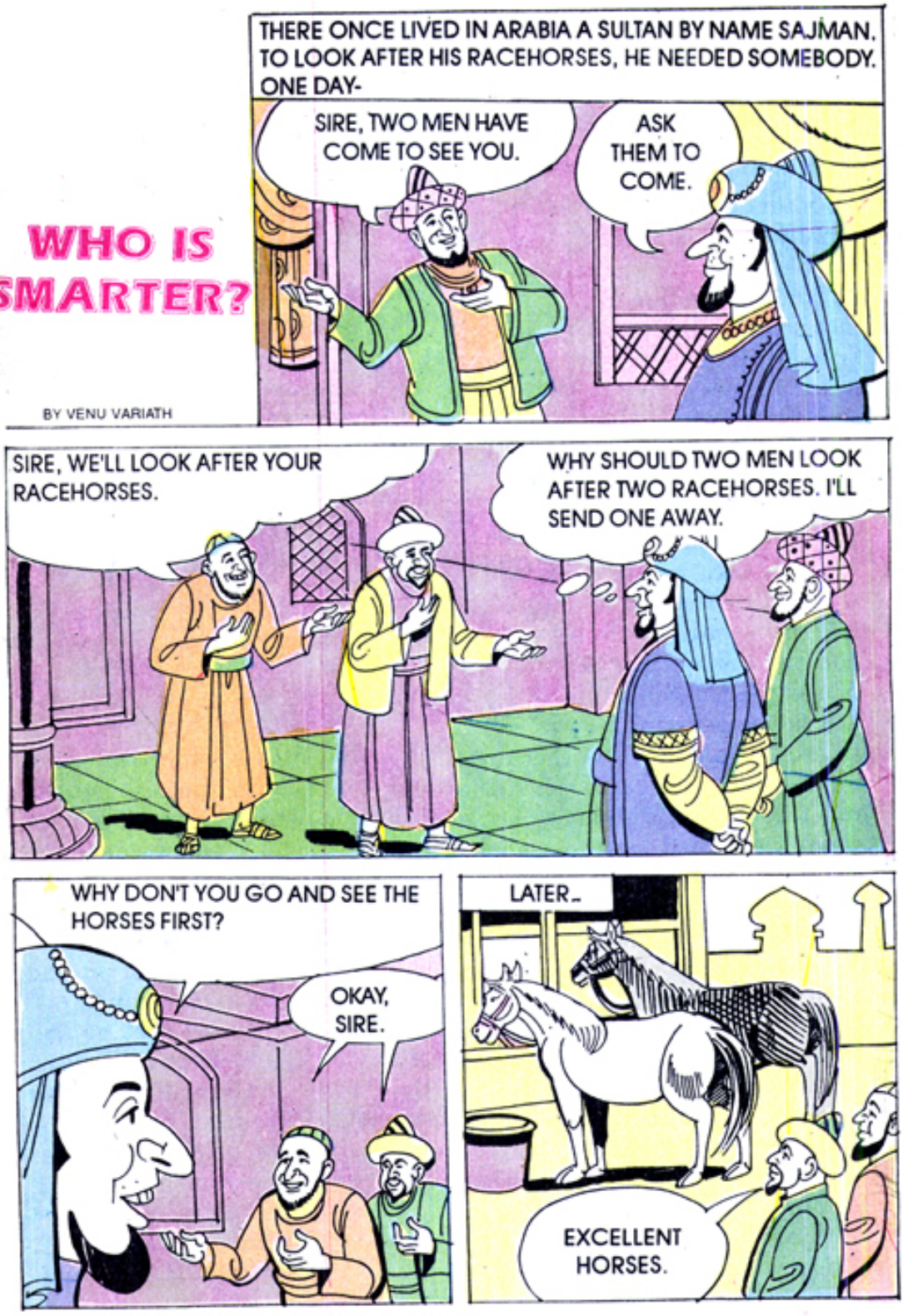
Vijay later learnt that two thieves had entered the house intending to make off with all valuables. When the thieves emerged from the house through the back door they saw shadows near the toilet. Terrified that they would be caught the thieves left the booty on the verandah steps and took to their heels. The commotion had brought father to the verandah.

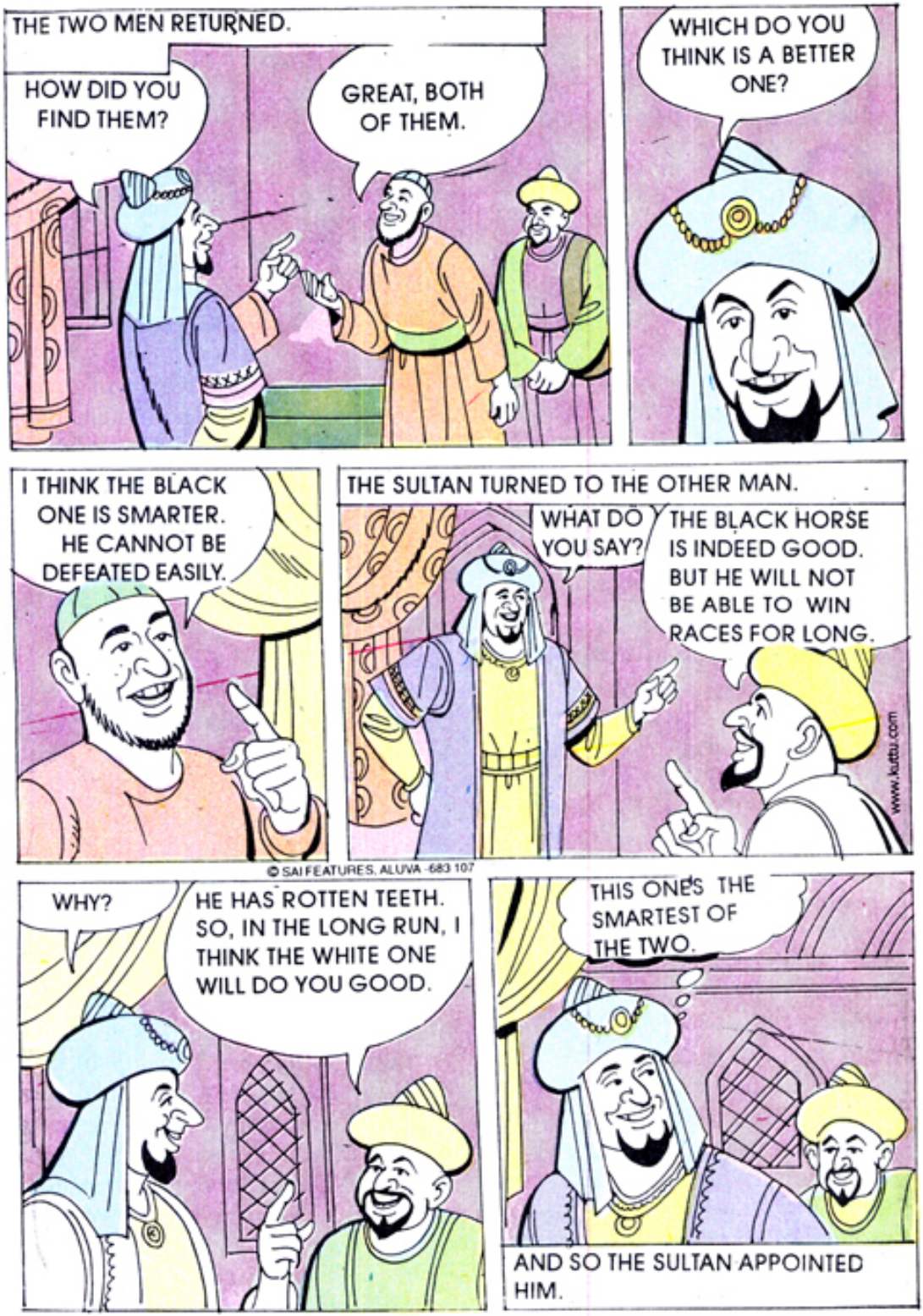
Vijay was pleased that he had prevented a theft. What had caused the shadow on the wall? Vijay did not have the courage to reveal his fears of ghosts. He decided that he'd investigate when he was well. Wouldn't he be bolder by then?

D. Johnson, Std. VIII C,
KV No. 2, Chennai.

WHO IS SMARTER?

BY VENU VARIATH




THE TWO MEN RETURNED.
HOW DID YOU FIND THEM?
GREAT, BOTH OF THEM.
WHICH DO YOU THINK IS A BETTER ONE?
I THINK THE BLACK ONE IS SMARTER. HE CANNOT BE DEFEATED EASILY.
THE SULTAN TURNED TO THE OTHER MAN.
WHAT DO YOU SAY?
THE BLACK HORSE IS INDEED GOOD. BUT HE WILL NOT BE ABLE TO WIN RACES FOR LONG.
www.kutty.com
© SAI FEATURES, ALUVA -683 107
WHY?
HE HAS ROTTEN TEETH. SO, IN THE LONG RUN, I THINK THE WHITE ONE WILL DO YOU GOOD.
THIS ONE'S THE SMARTEST OF THE TWO.
AND SO THE SULTAN APPOINTED HIM.

TELL-TALE ROCKS

Over the years mineral matter closes in on an object and preserves its shape. The object itself may disappear. The impression of the object is retained. This is called fossil.

Jellyfish, anemones, snails and cuttle fish cannot be fossilised. The skin and muscles of animals cannot be fossilised. Ossified tendons and bones can be fossilised.

The first recorded fossil study dates to 372 B.C. Theophratus, a Greek philosopher, studied fossils. Aristotle considered fossils as curiosities of ancient history.

Fossils began to be studied with more interest after 1778. The study of earth, geology, was established only in that year. Even today, 65 million years after the extinction of dinosaurs man is excavating bones of these giant creatures.

Our planet is 4,700 million years old. As a swirling cloud of gases and stardust earth could not support life. When the gases cooled and formed a hard crust, life began to appear.

To learn how life evolved we study rocks. Some rocks exhibit remains of life as it existed long ago. Not all rocks contain fossils. The igneous (meaning fire) rock is made from molten lava spewed by volcanoes. These blackened rocks are called granite. Granite does not contain fossils.

Rocks are also made from tiny particles of land and mountains worn away by weather. Depending upon the size of these particles, they form into clay, limestone or sandstone. The fossils of creatures that died long ago can be found on them. Other fossils come from lakebed rocks, from gravels and sand washed down from rivers.

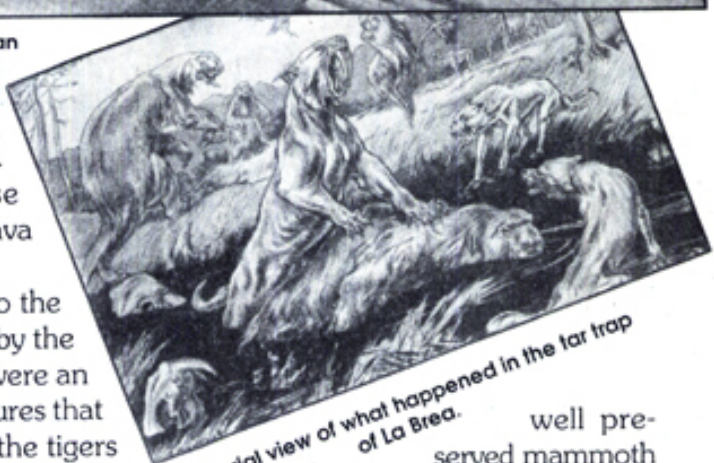
Sometimes we come across perfect fossils in caves. Fossils are found even in ice. Tiny insects can be found in amber. Amber is the hardened resin from prehistoric trees. Fossils turn up in tar pits too. One such pit is the mastadon pit in Central Asia.

A strange species of elephants inhabited this area. They had showel-shaped lower jaws. A huge lake was bordered by a swamp. The elephants browsed near the lake.

Slowly as the lake shrank, so did the swamps. The elephants met their mud graves as years went by. Scientists discovered the bones of the last of the elephants that were trapped in the mud graves many centuries after the species had died out.

In the US, La Brea in California is a fossil site. The lava spewed by an

• Restoring the fossil remains of an extinct reptile.



• Pictorial view of what happened in the tar trap of La Brea.

ancient volcano had solidified leaving large crevices. Water collected in these crevices. Below the solid lava was cooling tar.

Animals that ventured to the water were dragged down by the tar. The trapped animals were an easy prey to tigers and vultures that feasted on them. In turn, the tigers and vultures too were dragged into the tar pit.

From this site scientists have unearthed bones of over 30 kinds of large mammals and scores of other small species. Though they found bones of elephants, ground sloth, tigers and vultures, no bones of bears were found. They concluded that the bears were very cautious creatures.

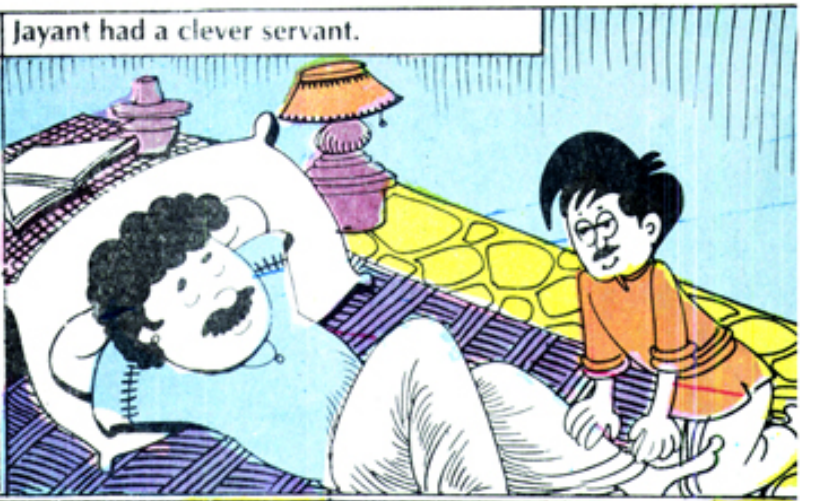
Even today nature is writing its story on rocks. In the ice of Siberia a well preserved mammoth carcass was discovered in 1937. The animal's flesh was edible!

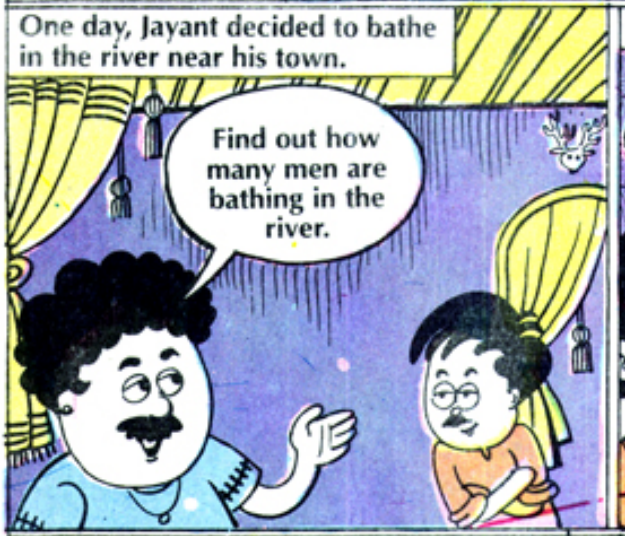
Paleontologists try to piece together the bones and fossils and tell us which animals lived on earth during a particular period. The discovery of mammoth bones and ground sloth has also given us an insight into man's evolution on earth.

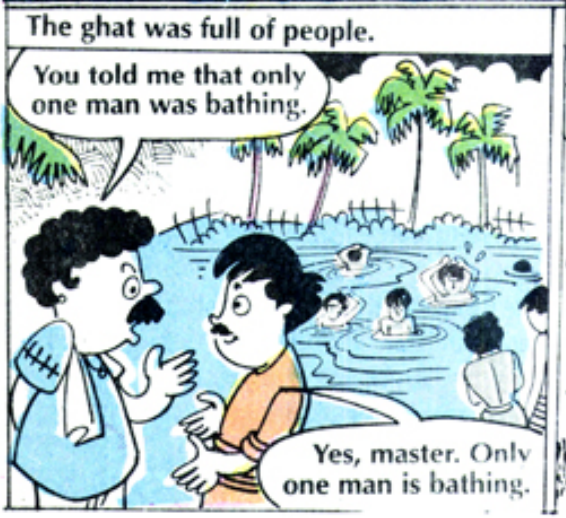
A. Kalarajani, Std. VIII B,
KV. CLRI,Chennai.

ONE MAN ONLY

Story :
B. Rajsekhar,
age 12, Sacred Heart School, Kharagpur.
Illustration :
MAHESH







A number of people tripped over it. No one bothered to have the boulder removed.
I'm hurt. Curse the boulder.
One man moved the boulder out of the path of the people.
Let me push it out of the way. It won't hurt anyone then.
On the way here, an old woman was begging for water.
Water, water please!
Get it yourself!
Everyone who passed that way ignored her. This man brought the old woman water.
Water... water...
Old woman! Here's water.
That is why I said that only one man was bathing here.
Indeed, you are right. He is the only man here.
You have taught me a valuable lesson.

VIEW

Child literacy

Atleast in the twentyfirst century, all children should be educated. Many children are unable to go to school because they can't afford the expenses.

Before every election, politicians promise a large sum of money towards education. Hardly are these promises ever fulfilled.

Unless all children of our country are educated our goal of a 'developed' country will remain a mere dream.

R. Rupa, Std. VII B,
NHES, Jamshedpur.

Boon or bane?

Nuclear arms are probably a boon.

Since a bomb if dropped can destroy an entire nation, countries which possess nuclear arms may think twice before using them, for fear of retaliation. But weapons cannot help to build nations. I think if we realised this, we will not support the nuclear arms race.

S. Anulekha, age 16,
NSS College,
Trivandrum.

India at crossroads

Soon, we have to bid good bye to the 20th century. We have made great progress in various fields like communication, transportation, medicine, nuclear technology and information technology. All this development has made our life more sophisticated and automation is a way of life today.

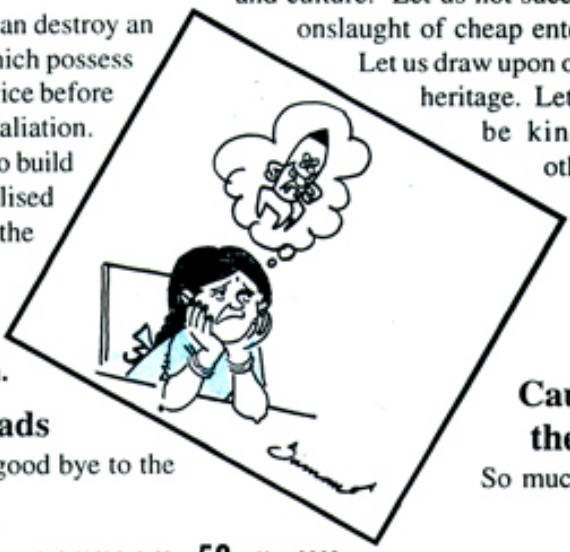
Yet we are still being taken for a ride by a few unscrupulous, selfish politicians. Greed, consumerism, cheap entertainment and vulgar advertisements gain precedence over traditional values. These values cherished by our ancestors are hardly found among people today.

We must make way for development but not at the cost of our ancient values.

Our educational system should be rooted in our culture. Knowledge of world history and western thoughts is helpful. These can be learnt along with our traditional values.

Let us nurture our high values, tradition and culture. Let us not succumb to the onslaught of cheap entertainment. Let us draw upon our spiritual heritage. Let us learn to be kind to each other.

Sneha Sundaram,
Std. IX A,
SES HS,
Thane.



Caught in the net

So much has been

POINT

talked about the advantage of the internet that I may sound weird trying to criticise it. Today there are 'chat' sites. Most students use the internet to chat up friends or send messages to them.

The real purpose of the web is to disseminate information. Hardly anyone uses the web for educational purposes.

Also, the internet is the privilege of the upper class. The mass does not get an opportunity to log on to the internet because it is extremely expensive.

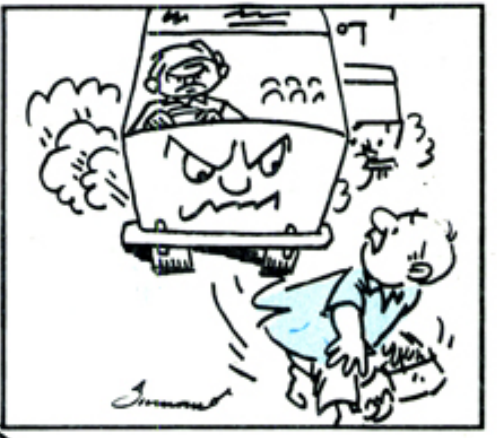
Soon we may have sites like www.dragonfly.epp and www.ant.epp The internet boom has happened. Let us try to benefit from the 'net' in which we are caught.

S. Aswin Sai Narain,
age 16,
Modern SSS, Chennai.

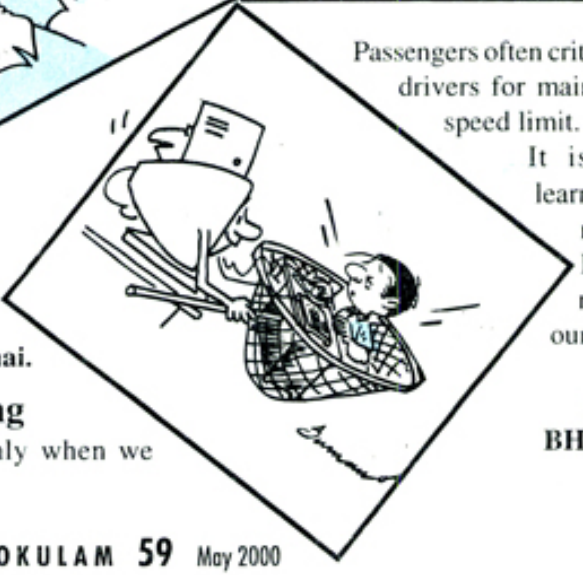
Over-speeding

Accidents occur only when we disregard the speed limit. Today's city roads are race-tracks to some drivers. They overtake speeding town-buses with little respect for road discipline. Most town-buses are run by private operators who survive on the number of passengers they can entice. In the 'race', the loser is the speeding motorist. Often the motorist is fatally injured.

Most college students leave home just 30 minutes before the college is scheduled to start. They ride motorcycles and overtake buses in their bid to reach their destination on time. By bus the same journey would last 40 - 45 minutes.



Passengers often criticise the bus drivers for maintaining the speed limit.

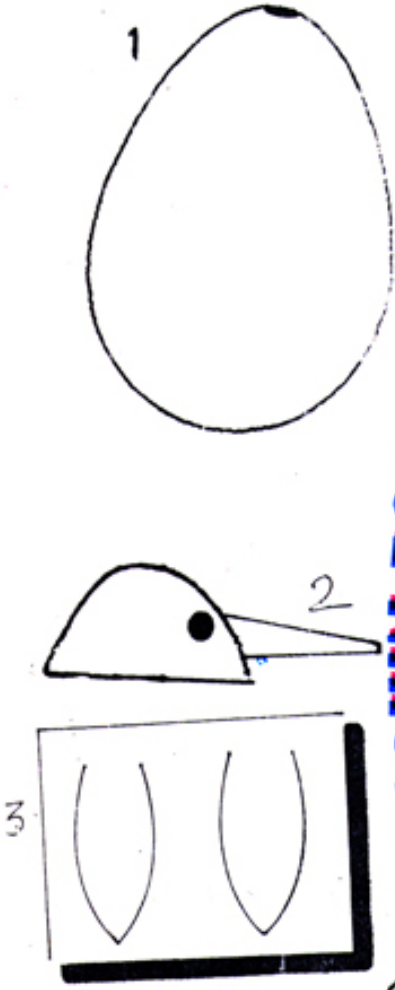


It is time we learnt to respect road rules. In the long run, it is to our advantage.

R. Nivas,
Std. XII E,
BHEL MHSS,
Trichy.

PENGUIN FOR SHOW CASE

CREATIVE CORNER



You need :

An egg shell, plastic dropper used in eyedrops, fevicol, paint - grey and black, cotton roll, two black circular bindis, chart paper, scissors, an egg holder.

Method :

Use an egg shell that has been broken on the narrow side. (Fig. 1)

Stuff a wad of cotton wool into the dropper.

Paste the bindis on either side of the dropper beak to mark the eyes. (Fig. 2)

Apply fevicol on the open end of the egg shell. Press the eye dropper with the cotton wool firmly on the open end.

In a chart paper cut out the wings of the penguin. (Fold the paper in two, sketch out the wing and cut it out.) (Fig. 3)

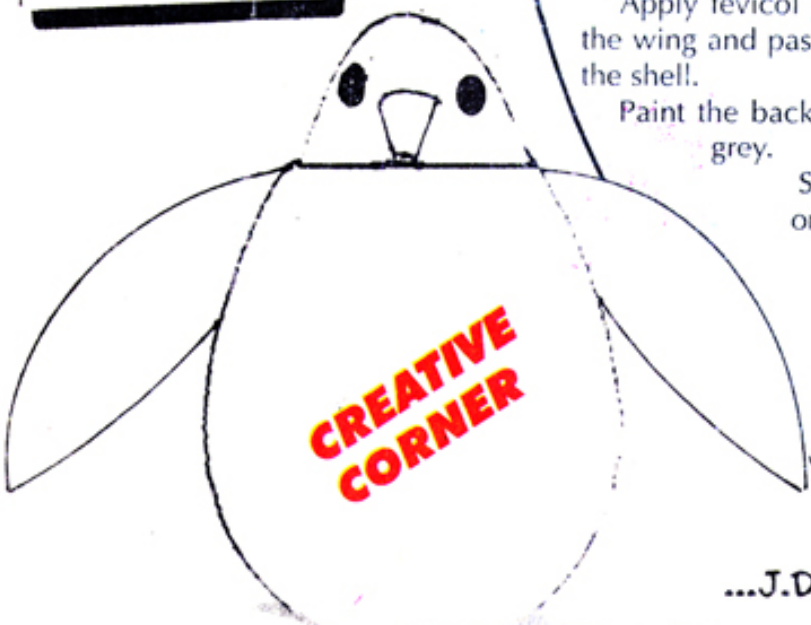
Paint the back of the wings black and allow them to dry.

Apply fevicol to the wider tip of the wing and paste on either side of the shell.

Paint the back of the penguin in grey.

Stand the penguin on an egg-holder.

J. Aarthy, Std. VIII B, Sri GVG Visalakshi MHSS, Udumalpet.



...J.Disney

THE MIDNIGHT Feast

Surekha and Suresh were excited. Their cousins had just arrived from Jabalpur. They would be spending a week with them.

After a short rest Aditi and Pradeep joined Surekha and Suresh to make plans for the next few days. Surekha, the oldest of the four jotted down cycling, games and movies.... when Suresh said, "Let's have a midnight feast."

A lively discussion immediately ensued. The feast would be held the following night in the garden. It would not be very cozy. December was a cold month in Delhi, but the discomfort had to be endured. After all, half the fun of a midnight feast was eating differently from the way one normally ate. The other half was sneaking out, unnoticed by the grown-ups.

Surekha and Suresh warned Aditi and Pradeep to tread cautiously as they crept out of the house. It was easy for Surekha and Suresh, who were familiar with the furniture in their home. Poor Aditi and Pradeep kept bumping into things. They hurt themselves but bravely suppressed their squeals.

A pen torch would make it easy to walk, but Surekha and Suresh feared that it would awaken their parents.

Midnight feasts had been forbidden since the last one, a year ago. On that occasion, Surekha and Suresh had gone off to a nearby park, lost track of the time and returned home at 3 a.m. Their absence had not been discovered but they had been so dull later that morning, that their parents had asked some searching questions. When the truth came out, Surekha and Suresh were firmly told that midnight picnics were out.

Surekha and Suresh warned the other two to be cautious

Surekha and Suresh reasoned that, as they were now much older, the ban must certainly be lifted; only, their parents had omitted to tell them so! Still, they did not want their parents to find out about tonight's little adventure. They wished that Aditi and Pradeep could see better in the dark.

It was a relief when they reached the garden. They were free now to talk and giggle unheard, as the windows of the house were closed to keep out the cold. Unfortunately, the rug they had brought did little to protect them from the cold damp grass.

The children were clad in thick sweaters but their teeth chattered as they munched bars of chocolate. No one quite liked to admit that their snacks would taste better in the warmth of their bedroom. In fact, it might have been a far better idea

to have had the feast indoors.

"How long do we have to be here?" asked Pradeep. The youngest in the group. He was saying aloud what the others were thinking.

"Well, this is a midnight feast," said Surekha, "so, we must stay on at least until 12 o'clock."

"I hope it's almost that," said Aditi shivering. Surekha and Suresh looked at each other in dismay. The party was not a success, with the guests wanting to leave just when it was starting. It was only 11.30 and the children waited impatiently for time to pass. Never had half an hour gone by so slowly and never had Surekha and Suresh valued so much their warm house which they took for granted.

When they finally stumbled through the front door, the children were frozen. Too numb to think clearly, Surekha and Suresh forgot to urge their cousins to be careful. Within seconds of entering the house, Pradeep walked straight into a low table. The vase in its centre fell on its side. Water streamed out and flowers lay scattered.

Pradeep burst into tears and Aditi groped vainly in the dark to reach out and comfort him. "We must have light," she hissed.

"We dare not," Surekha hissed back, although she realised that they could hardly clear up a mess they could not see. Even as she and Suresh were wondering what to do and Pradeep's sobs grew louder, the room was suddenly as bright as day. Surekha and Suresh did not have to look up to know that their parents stood in the doorway.

"Go to bed," said Surekha's father grimly. "We'll talk about this later."

The children fled. "At least we have a few hours before the blasting," said Aditi, as Pradeep continued to cry.

Surekha and Suresh were silent. They were not worried about what today or tomorrow might bring. They were, however, afraid of what would come after Aditi and Pradeep had left, which was what their father meant by "later".

Suryakumari Dennison,
Bangalore.

What did the dustbin full of garbage tell the empty dustbin?

'Tere bin mein kuch bi nahin'!

(I am nothing without you!)

Aparna Renganathan, age 15
DAV GSSS, Chennai.

Hello Doctor!

*** V. Sirisha, Secunderabad.**

? How is brain fever caused? What are the symptoms?

! 'Brain fever' is the term used by laymen. It means that either the brain or its coverings called meninges is inflammed. The medical term for it is encephalitis, meningitis or meningo-encephalitis.

Encephalitis is the inflammation of the brain. It is caused by Japanese-B virus. The blood of pigs in Tamil Nadu is the resevoir of these viruses. The bite of a particular mosquito called 'culex vishnuii' transmits them from pigs to human beings. The viruses reach our brain through blood and causes the disease. After a short period of general weakness in the body, the disease is ushered in by a sudden onset of high fever, severe headache, vomitting, neck pain, drowsiness and convulsions.

Often coma may precede the convulsions. Since the disease affects the nerves, weakness or paralysis of the limbs occurs.

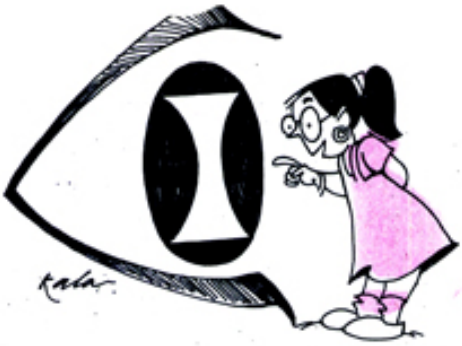
Is there no freedom from glasses?

The inflammation of meninges is called meningitis. It is caused by bacteria. Symptoms of this condition are the same as encephalitis. Neck rigidity is more prominent in meningitis. If both the brain and the meninges are inflammed, it is called meningoencephalitis.

*** B.S. Vijay, Bangalore.**

? If once a person begins to wear glasses, will he have to wear them always? Is there no cure for short-sightedness?

! Short-sightedness is a defect of the eye. Distant objects cannot be



seen clearly but near objects can be seen clearly. It is caused by the lengthening of the eyeball.

The medical term for short-sight is myopia. The retina acts as a screen on which the images of the objects fall. In the myopic eye light rays from the distant objects are brought to a focus at a point in front of the retina. So clear vision is not possible. To achieve it, the rays of light must be diverged by a concave lens so that light rays are focused on the retina. This is why myopic people have to wear glasses always.

In recent years, contact lenses have become increasingly popular. However, there is the risk of complications such as corneal infection. More recently, a special type of treatment with excimer laser is used to cure myopia permanently.

*** B.Gokul, Jamshedpur.**

? What causes convulsions? What is the cure? How can we prevent it?

! Convulsion is a sudden violent involuntary contraction of a group of muscles in our body. Convulsions occur in epilepsy. It is a disease of the nervous system. People suffering from this disease have a sudden onset of convulsions after which they may become unconscious or fall into a coma. Once the attack passes, they return to normalcy.

Medical experts have so far not been able to fully explain the causes of this disease. According to the explanations available, during the attack some kind of chemical changes take place inside the cells of the brain. The brain responds to these changes by sending out discharges that cause convulsions.

Say 'no' to sweets, cakes and creams.

An epileptic attack may be caused by high fever, head injury, mental shock, brain tumours or stroke. Many drugs are available to control and prevent attacks of epilepsy. These medicines are usually given to epileptic patients over a period of two years.

*** B. Pavan, Bangalore.**

? What are blackheads? How can we get rid of them?

! Pimples are otherwise called blackheads. The outer layer of our skin contains numerous open pores and the middle layer contains seba-

SIMPLE LIFE

Like most philosophers of his time, Socrates believed that a wise man should live frugally and not wear even shoes. Yet he constantly fell under the spell of the market place. He loved to look at the wares on display.

One of his friends wanted to know why he went to market, since he never bought anything. Said Socrates, "I am always amazed to see how many things there are that I don't need."

Girish Kumar, age 9,
Model HS, Trivandrum.

---

ceous glands. These glands secrete an oil called sebum which keeps the skin soft and supple.

Sometimes, the pores get clogged along with wastes from the skin-cells and dirt from the air. Now the sebum hardens and the top portion of the clogged sebum which is exposed to air turns black. Hence the name-blackheads. The skin around them develops swelling resulting in pimples.

We can use anti-pimple cream along with antibiotics to cure them. In addition, we should adopt a healthy skin care routine to prevent the pimples. 1. Keep the face clean by frequently washing with warm water. 2. Say "no" to sweets, chocolates, cakes, creams, oil and other fattening foods. 3. Avoid spicy and fried food. 4. Drink plenty of water. 5. Eat plenty of green vegetables and fruits. 6. Maintain a regular exercise regimen.

Dr. G. Ganesan,
Rajapalayam

THE SLIMY CREATURES

Frogs and toads are the first vertebrates to have evolved from their fish-like ancestors. They are the first among living vertebrates to develope a true voice. The web-like membranous skin present on the toes facilitates swimming in frogs. The toad is rough-skinned marked with prominent warts, spiny tubercles and kidney-shaped parotid glands on the back. The toad, is a land-dweller. All frogs and toads need water for reproduction.

* Tree frog

* Common Indian toad

Skipping frog

The skipping frog is the most widespread of all the Indian frogs. They can be found in all waters. The frog's remarkable agility to skip over the water was first noticed by the Moghul emperor Babur. This species collects in large numbers during monsoon.

The 'vocal' males commence a 'croaking' concert to attract mates. The green frog, so called because its leaf green colour is retained while in water, is found in abundance among the dense aquatic vegetation. The

• Indian burrowing frog

Indian bull frog is so known for the strength of its voice and size.

It has a voracious appetite and consumes anything that it can seize and overpower. Its food includes a variety of invertebrate and vertebrate animals : insects, earthworms, crabs, molluscs and even small water birds and snakes.

The tree frog is the most familiar of Indian frogs. It frequents houses and adheres to the walls, window panes and wash tubs. With the tips of the fingers and toes shaped like rounded discs, this frog can "walk" on smooth and vertical surfaces reminding us of the movements of a gecko on the wall.

This causes panic both among children and adults because of its preference to stay put in the kitchen and bathrooms. It seeks these places during warm days. It hides in a corner and returns to the same spot even after being chased out. It exudes a large quantity of urine, when first caught. This frog is usually detested.

Burrowing Frogs

The Indian burrowing frog is rather toad-like in shape and size and is very secretive in its habits. It burrows in the loose soil effortlessly with the help of a spade-like skinny structure present on the hind foot. It is found in sandy tracts and grassy lands close to water. The Balloon frog is another nocturnal species commonly found buried in the muddy soil during warmer months. It emerges only after heavy showers. It inflates its body like a balloon.

Common Toad

The common Indian toad's favourite haunts are the human dwellings. By day they hide under logs, stones, bricks or in holes in some cool corner. They exude a milky secretion from their large parotid glands when caught and squeezed. These glands are kidney-shaped prominent warts on the back. The secretion protects the toad against its enemies.

The edible hindlegs of certain frogs brought valuable foreign exchange.

Amphibians prey upon a great variety of harmful insects and other pests that damage food crops. The tadpoles feed on mosquito larvae. The edible bulky hind legs of the bullfrog and the green frog earned a good amount of foreign exchange till the government banned the trade.

Amphibians form the buffer diet for a variety of land animals. The frog is often used in the laboratories to study animal physiology.

T.S.N. Murthy, Chennai.

EXPERIENCE

Playing detectives

One day my friend and I were playing detectives, under a neem tree. My friend stepped on something soft. She took a stick and poked it from the side and from above. She then smelt the stick. A foul smell emanated from the object. She said it was a dead body.

That night I didn't sleep. I lay in my bed crying. The next day we did the same thing. I suggested that we dig out the body. We found out that it was a bag of cement. Since then we often look back at our adventure with amusement.

A foul smell emanated from the object.

Arvind Kattar, Std. VII, LMHSS, Coimbatore.

Saved by hair

My grandmother was eight years then. She had knee length hair. Though maintaining it was difficult she had no alternative. Often she begged with her mother to have it cut to shoulder-length. But to no avail.

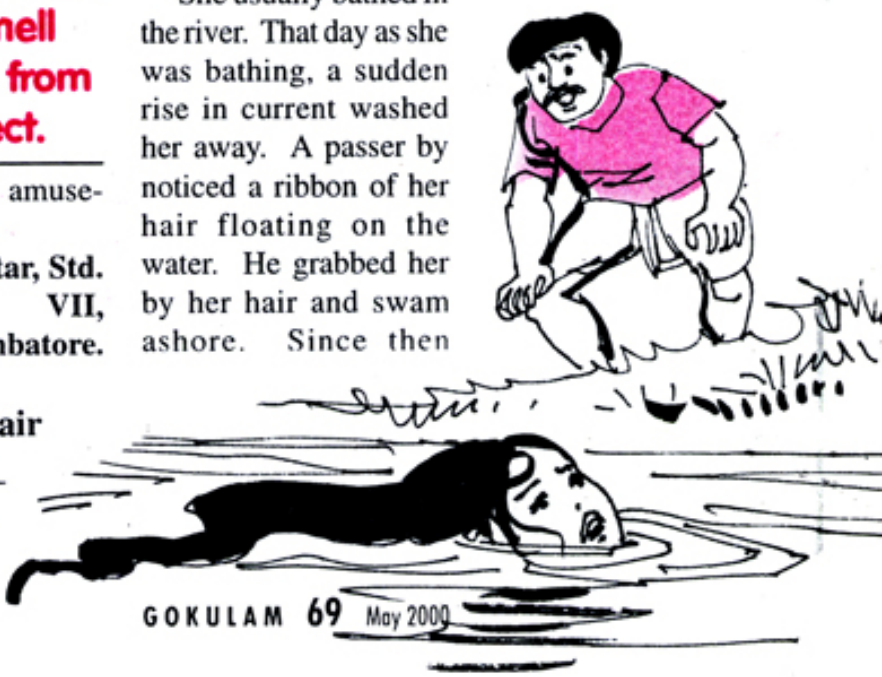
She usually bathed in the river. That day as she was bathing, a sudden rise in current washed her away. A passer by noticed a ribbon of her hair floating on the water. He grabbed her by her hair and swam ashore. Since then grandma has retained her long hair. She never complained about it.

A passerby noticed her hair.

R. Veena Raj, age 16, New Forest KV, Dehradun.

'Poirot' gets a scare

I borrowed an Agatha Christie novel from the school library. I brought it home and asked mother permission to stay up late to read the



book.

I settled on my bed and had read only a few paragraphs when I heard a thumping on my window. Since no one appeared on the balcony or in the room, I felt nervous.

I did not have the courage to investigate. I burrowed my head under the pillow and went off to sleep.

The next morning I told mother everything. She said, the window's hinges were loose. Hence if a vehicle sped by, the window panes vibrated due to air pressure on the pane. I did not have the courage to read the Agatha Christie novel either.

I heard a thumping on my window.

I returned it to the library the next day.

Madan Mohan, age 13,
Lok Kalyan PS,
Kalyan.

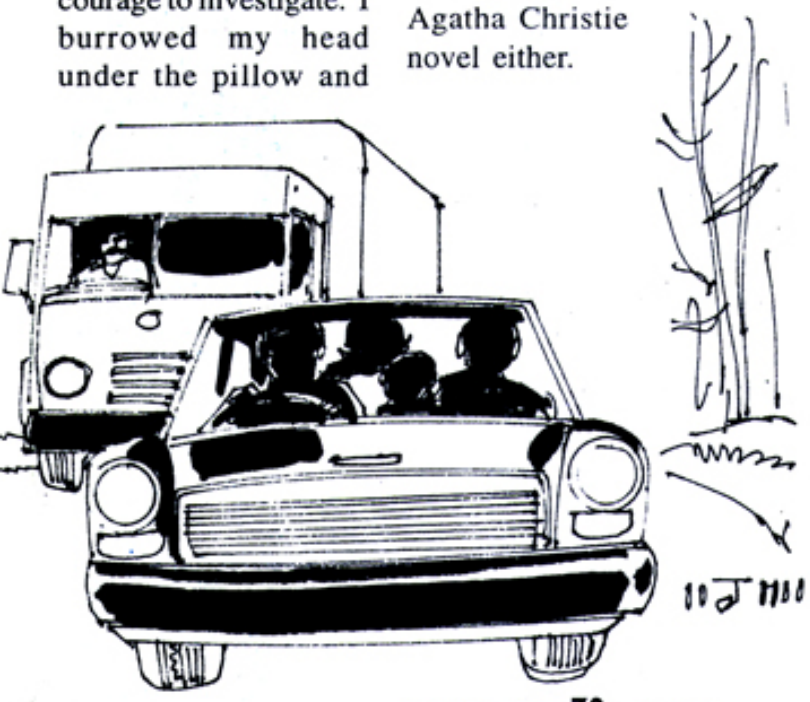
A race turned sour

We were returning by car from an outing. We occupied the rear seat in the car. Father was driving and mother sat beside him. We were behind a lorry. Egged on by us, my father overtook the lorry. We clapped our hands in joy.

Father stepped on the accelerator so that the lorry driver wouldn't be able to overtake us.

It seemed we couldn't shake off the lorry driver. He followed us and at one point the lorry driver was abreast of our car. He put out his hand and told my father, "the rear passenger door is not properly locked. The children may fall off."

The lorry driver then fell



behind our car. So much for the race!

D.S. Vinu,
Bangalore.

And the winner is....

I participate in all competitions held at school. Yet until my VII standard I hadn't won any prize. That was the first time I was participating in a debate competition.

The lizard approached me. I screamed.

I was terrified to go up on the stage and speak over the mike. However, encouraged by my parents and my teachers I prepared for the debate.

I went on stage. Though I looked confident there were butterflies in my stomach.

The results were announced at the end of the debate session. The judge announced the third prize. My heart sank. I thought I'd win the third prize. Then the second prize was announced. I waited to clap for the first prize winner.

My name came through the mike. I realised only then that I had won the first prize. Now I have no stage fear.

S.R. Chaitanya,
age 13,
Samaja Seva Mandali, Bangalore.

Lizard in class

It was the maths period. We were busy solving a difficult problem. Suddenly a few benches away students began shrieking.

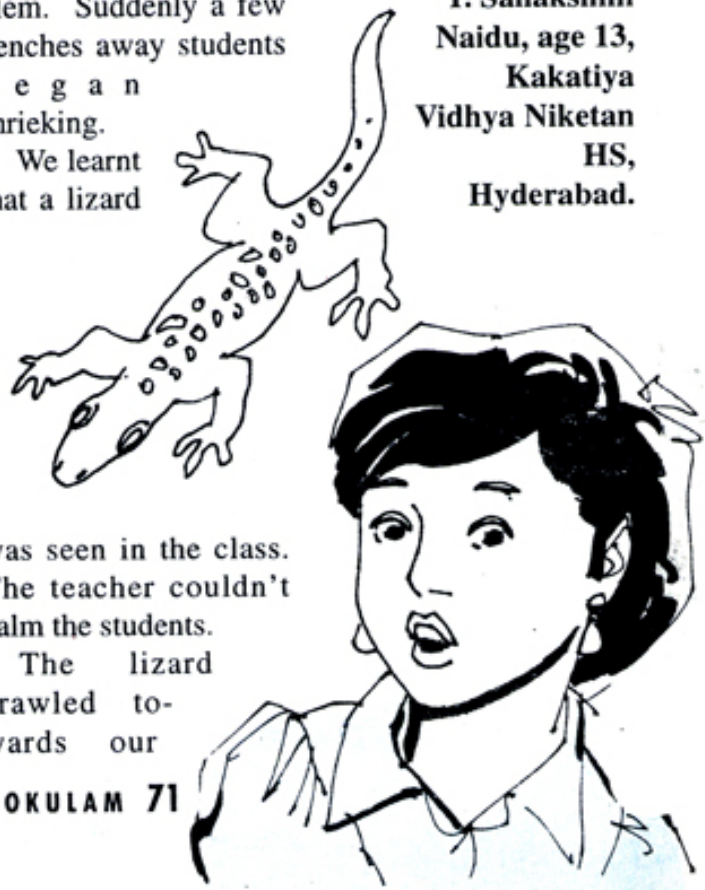
We learnt that a lizard was seen in the class. The teacher couldn't calm the students.

The lizard crawled towards our bench. All the students began running helter skelter. I sat on the bench waiting for an opportunity to jump out of the lizard's way.

But the lizard approached my leg and I let out a scream. This scared the lizard. It took refuge under my friend's bag. I flung the bag away.

By then the commotion in the class had attracted the peon. She carried away the lizard and restored peace in the class.

T. Sailakshmi Naidu, age 13,
Kakatiya Vidhya Niketan HS,
Hyderabad.



GOKULAM ART GALLERY

K. Kohila, age 14,
Malaysia.

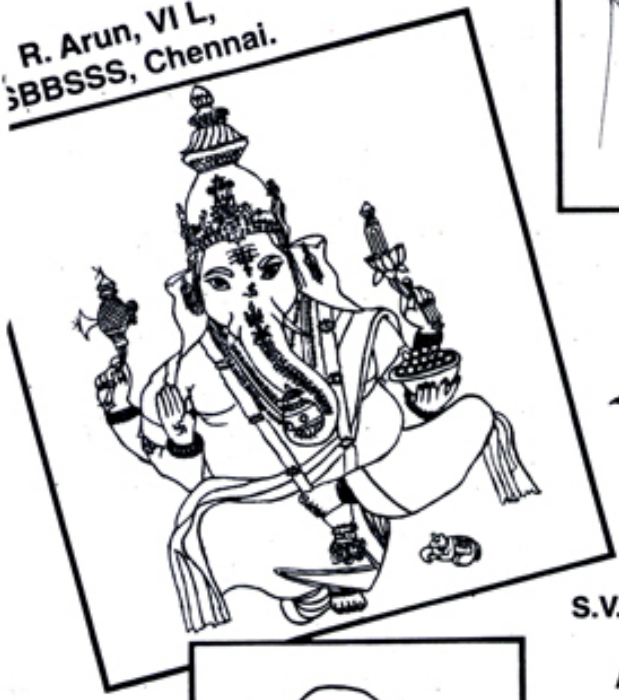
B. Prajwala
Narambully, I PUC E,
MGM College, Udupi.

T.C. Srilekha, XI, Nazarath MHSS, Chennai

V. Shivashankar,
IX,
St. Patrick's
School,
Pondicherry.

R. Shruthi, IV B,
KV CLRI, Chennai.

R. Arun, VI L,
SBBSSS, Chennai.



S.V. Vishnu Prasad,
XC,
ARLM MHSS,
Cuddalore.

S. Reshma, age 11,
St. Thomas
School,
Pandalam.

Dear Kohila,
Please send your Indian
contact address.

PENPALS

Name : Ahamed A. Razak
Age : 11
Address : No. 4, Hill Castle Place, Colombo - 12, Sri Lanka.
Hobbies : Reading, swimming, playing cricket, cycling and watching T.V. (Indian programmes).

Name : G. Phani Manasa
Age : 11
Address : Fl. No. 504, Godavari Building, Suchidhana Colony, Malad (E), Mumbai - 400 097.
Hobbies : Reading Gokulam and comics, playing on casio.

Name : T.S. Swathi
Age : 11
Address : D-4, Alangoor Groove Apts., 23rd Main, 16th Cross, J.P. Nagar, 5th Phase, Bangalore - 560 078.
Hobbies : Tennis, drawing, reading comics, dancing, singing, collecting coins, cycling.

Name : K. Poornima
Age : 11
Address : (Old No. 50), No. 52, I Main Road, CIT Nagar, Chennai - 600 035.
Hobbies : Drawing, painting, gardening, needlework, music, playing.

Name : Y. Kalpana
Age : 11
Address : D/o Y. Jagannatha Reddy, H.No. 4-5-137/2, Koritepadu 3rd lane, Guntur - 522 007.
Hobbies : Chatting, making new friends, playing, watching cartoons, music, reading.

Name : Dhanya S. Nambiar
Age : 13
Address : A-1, 'Vanshree' Trilok Nagar, Near Vrindavan Society, Sayed Vasna Road, Vadodara, Gujarat - 390 015.
Hobbies : Singing, dancing, collecting stamps, reading, writing poems, chatting.

Name : MD. Ziaul Raheman
Age : 17
Address : H.No. A/1/7, CCI Colony, Karkuta township, T.V. Sedam, Dist. Gulbarga - 585 210. Karnataka.
Hobbies : Nature watching, music, reading comics.

Name : V. Raghu Veer
Age : 13
Address : C/o. V.A. Ashoka Kumar, Offs.

Rearrange these pictures in the right order

Concept
N.V. Ganapathy
Developed by
Suman

Qrts., K.G.F. Karnataka - 563 115.
Hobbies : Collecting stamps, music, reading magazines like Gokulam.

Name : Sushma S. Kumar
Age : 13
Address : 1244, IV Main, E Block, II Stage, Rajaji Nagar, Bangalore - 560 010.
Hobbies : Drawing, reading, writing, collecting greeting cards, stamps and coins.

Name : Sruthi J.P.
Age : 12
Address : 6/4, Thiruvengadam Street Extension, R.K. Nagar, Chennai - 600 028.
Hobbies : Reading, dancing, painting, drawing.

Name : G.E. Lakshmikrupa
Age : 13
Address : A/2, Vasanth Apartments, 21, South Mada Street, Srinagar Colony, Saidapet, Chennai - 15.
Hobbies : Collecting stamps, reading, music, cycling, chatting.

Name : Nivedita Nair
Age : 13
Address : 'Suchitra', Plot No. 24, I.T.I. Colony, Kuppiode, Palakkad - 678 007.
Hobbies : Reading, music, cooking, making friends.

Name : Debanjana Dasgupta
Age : 15
Address : P-8, Tagore Park, Dr. R.N. Tagore Road, Calcutta - 700 056.
Hobbies : Music, cooking, painting, reading, making friends.

Name : T.V. Renu Krishna
Age : 11
Address : H.No. 102, Sai Sruthi Apartments, Vidya Nagar, Kurnool - 518 001.
Hobbies : Cycling, surfing the net, reading story books.

Name : R. Srinithya
Age : 10
Address : 21/4, T.P. Koil Street, Jai Flats, Triplicane, Chennai - 600 005.
Hobbies : Painting, reading, playing, music, drawing.

Name : M. Divya
Age : 10
Address : 1/8, Residency Apartments, 1, Trustpakkam South Street, Mandaveli, Chennai - 600 028.
Hobbies : Drawing, painting, reading, cycling, writing poems and stories.

Name : Pavitra Kavya
Age : 12
Address : A-2/106, Ground Floor, DDA Flats, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi - 110 029.
Hobbies : Reading, collecting G.K. questions, photography, music, computer (microsoft), drawing, watching cartoon network, making friends.

Name : G.J. Roopmathi
Age : 13
Address : B-3/118, Ground Floor, Janakpuri, New Delhi - 110 058.
Hobbies : Reading books, pop-music, cycling, planting saplings and writing articles.

Ans : CDAB

POEM

A "FUNNY" LANGUAGE

Know of a funny language!
That is the English
language.
This language is very strange,
For there are words we cannot change.
The plural of box we say boxes,
But Ox is oxen never Oxes.
The plural of mouse becomes mice,
But house never becomes hice.
The plural of man becomes men,
Why shouldn't the plural of pan
become pen!
Many brothers we call brethren,
Many sisters is not sisteren!
So English is funny we all will agree,
It is the funniest language
We ever did see!

L.R. Phanindra,
I PUC, Bangalore.

CRICKET

Pakistan clinched the Sharjah cup. Despite a slow start they scored past India and beat South Africa to win the cup.

One more to go

Australia have registered their tenth consecutive test match win. They have to win just one more match to equal the West Indies record of 11 consecutive test match wins. Australia will be playing their 11th match against W. Indies.

Players of 20th century

Don Bradman of Australia edged past Gary Sobers by a margin of 10 votes. Bradman scored 100 votes and became Wisden's player of the century. *Wisden* is a well-known cricket almanac. Sobers scored 90 votes. Others in the top 20 include Shane Warne, Sunil Gavaskar, Sachin Tendulkar and Kapil Dev.

NEW RECORD SET

Record broken

West Indian bowler Courtney Walsh took his 435th wicket recently. He broke the eight-year old record held by Kapil Dev. Kapil Dev had taken 434 wickets, in 131 test matches and one-day internationals. Walsh's record came off 114 matches. Courtney Walsh was given a hero's welcome back home.

* Courtney Walsh

Match fixing scandal

South Africa's captain Hansie Cronje has been accused of involvement in 'match fixing'. Cronje is believed to have let India win matches in the recent Indian tour in return for large sums of money paid to him and his team mates by bookies who conduct gambling.

* Shane Warne

* Tendulkar

* Kapil Dev

* Gavaskar

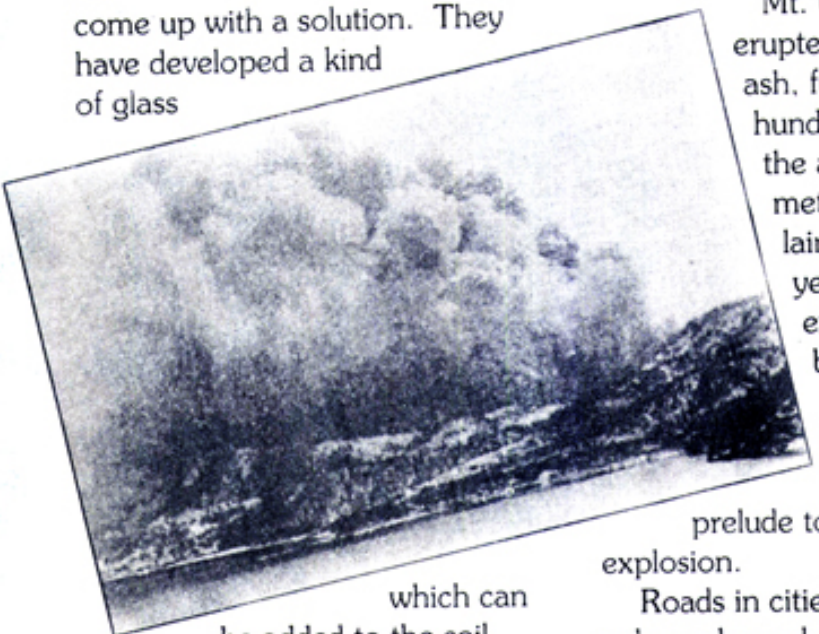
QUALIFIES FOR OLYMPICS

India's weightlifter Dingko Singh qualified for the Sydney Olympics to be held in September. Dingko Singh is the Asian Games gold medalist.

NEWSBITS

Glass food for plants

Sometimes some plants do not absorb all the fertilisers supplied through the soil. At a research institute in Calcutta scientists have come up with a solution. They have developed a kind of glass which can be added to the soil. The glass contains large amounts of silicates which become good fertilisers for the plant. The glass frits have been used in oilseeds and pulses. The laboratory experiments have proved successful.



Paper car

Japan's latest attraction is a car made from paper. The Japanese handmade paper (washi) car reaches a speed of 125 km/hr. The car is illuminated from inside. It is called Glow-worm. Japan proposes to exhibit it at the expo 2000 to be held in Hanover in June.

Volcano erupts

Mt. Usu of Japan has erupted throwing up ash, fumes and smoke hundreds of metres into the air. The 732 metre volcano has lain dormant for 20 years. The volcano exploded five times between April 1 and April 4. Vulcanologists say that this is just a prelude to a mega explosion.

Roads in cities close to the volcano have developed wide cracks. Tremors continue to rock the areas near Mt. Usu.

Smallest newspaper

A publisher in Brazil has brought out the smallest possible newspaper. The newspaper, *Your Honour*, is a 16-page monthly. It measures one inch by 1.4 inches The publisher said that the idea was a 75-year old dream of her family.

THE ROSE GARDEN MYSTERY

PART IV

Shoba and her cousin, Rakesh get involved in a mystery. The rose garden close to Shoba's house is sealed following the arrest of the garden's owner Raman lal. Raman lal is charged with murder. The people in the area don't believe that Raman lal is the murderer. Shoba seeks Rakesh's help. Three more children also join hands.

Rakesh snatched the binoculars from Arvind. "Here, let me take a look." Rakesh gasped as he looked through the binoculars. "Hey, someone's picking it up."

Arvind dashed down the stairs and was soon in front of the garden. A construction labourer walked out of the garden. He had the ring in his hand.

"What fools we are! The garden was not sealed at all," Rakesh said.

Meanwhile Shoba gathered enough courage to ask the labourer, "Is that your ring? May I take a look at it?"

The labourer bristled with anger. He said tersely, 'No, you may not."

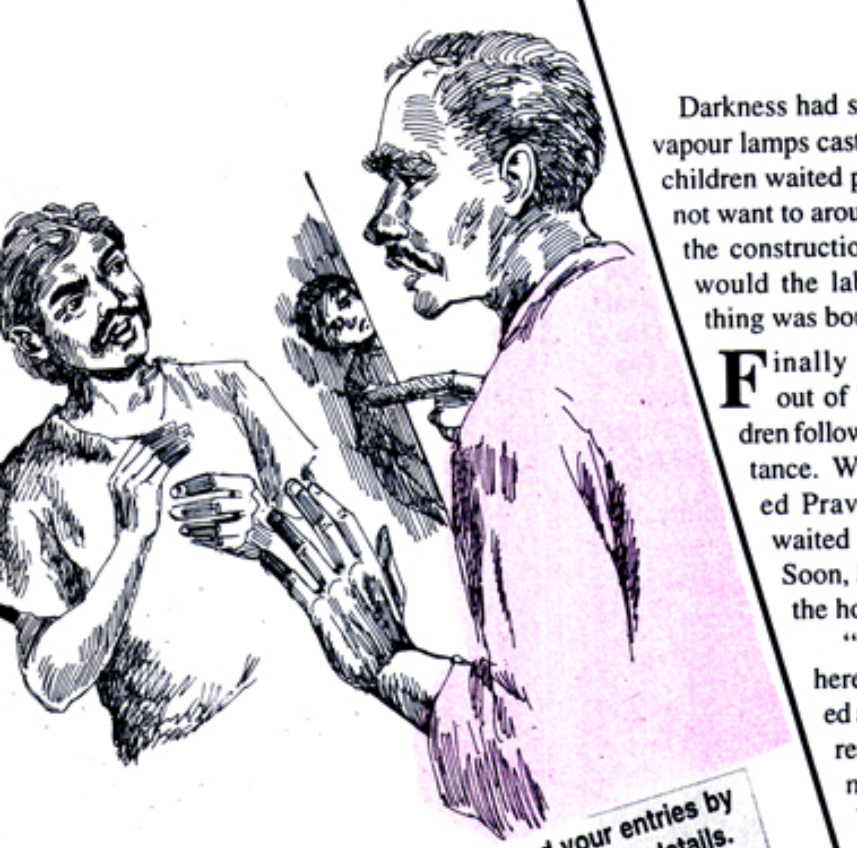
By then the labourer's wife had emerged from the nearby tent. "Arey, why are you behaving like a boor? Let them take a look at the ring. They are not going to steal it."

"Where did you buy the ring from?" Sameera asked. A construction worker could hardly afford such an expensive ring.

"That's none of your business," the man thundered.

The woman pacified her husband and turned to the children. "It was given by Suresh saab, his supervisor and the engineer of this building."

On their way back home, each one



The story ends with part V. Send your entries by May 10, 2000. See page 84 for address details. Word limit : 350. J. Prasanna wins Rs. 100/-

was thinking about the mystery. Why would a man gift a gold ring to an employee for no reason? When was the garden thrown open to the public? Have the police solved the puzzle? Is Ramu kaka really involved in the murder?

They decided that they would take a walk in the garden after dinner. How would they get past their parents? Rakesh and Arvind decided to tell their parents that they were planning a combine study session at a friend's place. Shoba and Sameera decided to use the same ruse.

It was a lie that the adults accepted. They didn't even suspect that the children were upto something!

Darkness had set in. The sodium vapour lamps cast a dull glow as the children waited patiently. They did not want to arouse the suspicion of the construction labourer. What would the labourer do? Something was bound to happen.

Finally the man stepped out of his tent. The children followed him at a safe distance. When the man reached Praveen's house, they waited with bated breath. Soon, Suresh came out of the house.

"Why did you come here?" Suresh appeared agitated. The labourer replied, "I've lost my peace of mind. You can't buy me using a wretched ring. I am going to tell everything."

"Tell what?" Suresh cried.

"I'm going to tell the police that you killed Raman lal's boy and that I was with you."

"No!" Suresh shouted. "I didn't kill him. I merely threatened him so that his father would agree to sell that garden to me. He tried to run away. In the process he was knocked down by a speeding car." The labourer returned the ring to Suresh and walked out of the gate. Suresh appeared as if he'd seen a ghost.

Shoba walked upto Suresh and said, "Uncle we know you are innocent. Why not tell the police the truth? It will bring the original culprits to book. It will also help to save Ramu kaka's life."

(To continue)

J. Prasanna, Std. XI,
KV, Eddumalairam, Medak.

A BOAT RIDE

My friend and I made it to Yercaud for a weekend. At Yercaud, it was but natural for us to go boating. As it is holiday time, the boats were difficult to obtain. We had to wait for a long time for our turn. We wanted a paddle boat.

Neither of us had any experience with a boat. To start with, making the boat proceed in the direction which we intended was a major porblem. However, once we got accustomed to the paddling, it was real fun. We paddled to the other side of the water stretch. It was not easy, but we did make it. Our return journey was a nightmare.

I have never been on a boat. Yet I said I'd paddle.

There were other boats. Some boats were much larger in size and moved at greater speed too. When we were just a few metres from the shore, a large boat passed us by creating waves. Our tiny boat began wobbling. We had tired considerably. Both of us were regretting our adventure already! We had stopped briefly to gather our strength. I stood up to shout at the people the other boat.

The boat was now rocking. Not knowing what to do, my friend started paddling furiously in the opposite direction. This did not help. My friend panicked and moved to a side. The boat toppled over. Both of us fell, gasping as we hit the cold water. Neither of us knew swimming.

Scared and shivering, we shouted for help. Luckily for us, the water was not very deep at that point. We were soon rescued by the occupants of other boats nearby.

We were soaked to the skin. A few picknickers lent us some towels with which we dried ourselves. We managed to dry our clothes to some extent. We never tried our hand at rowing again.

We haven't forgotten our maiden adventure either!

Sai Prasad, Std. XII G,
Gill Adarsh MHSS,
Chennai.

SPEAKING

USE YOUR NOODLE

Everyone seems to be interested in improving his or her spoken English these days. That's probably the reason why there are so many spoken English institutes in our cities. How do you actually go about improving your spoken English? In order to do that, you need to know what you sound like.

Do you know what your English sounds like? Have you ever heard yourself talking to another person in English? Unless you have an idea how you sound to other people, it becomes rather difficult for you to improve. After all, you do have to know what it is that you have to improve on.

If you don't know, then you have a problem of where to begin. What are the areas that you are going to focus on? Are you going to focus on grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary, etc? In order to answer these questions you need to know what your problem areas are, and to do that, you need to hear yourself use English. Yes, you have to hear yourself.

We do hear ourselves when we speak don't we? We do, but unfortunately that's not what we actually sound like to our listeners.

To have some idea of what you sound like, you have to make use of the cassette player and record yourself. Many people are surprised by what they sound like. After listening to the tape, they end up saying, "That doesn't sound like me. That's not me, is it? I don't speak like that!" Whether you like it or not, that is you! The tape recorder doesn't lie. The voice you hear is yours and that's what you sound like to your friends.

Here's a simple technique that you can use to improve your spoken English.

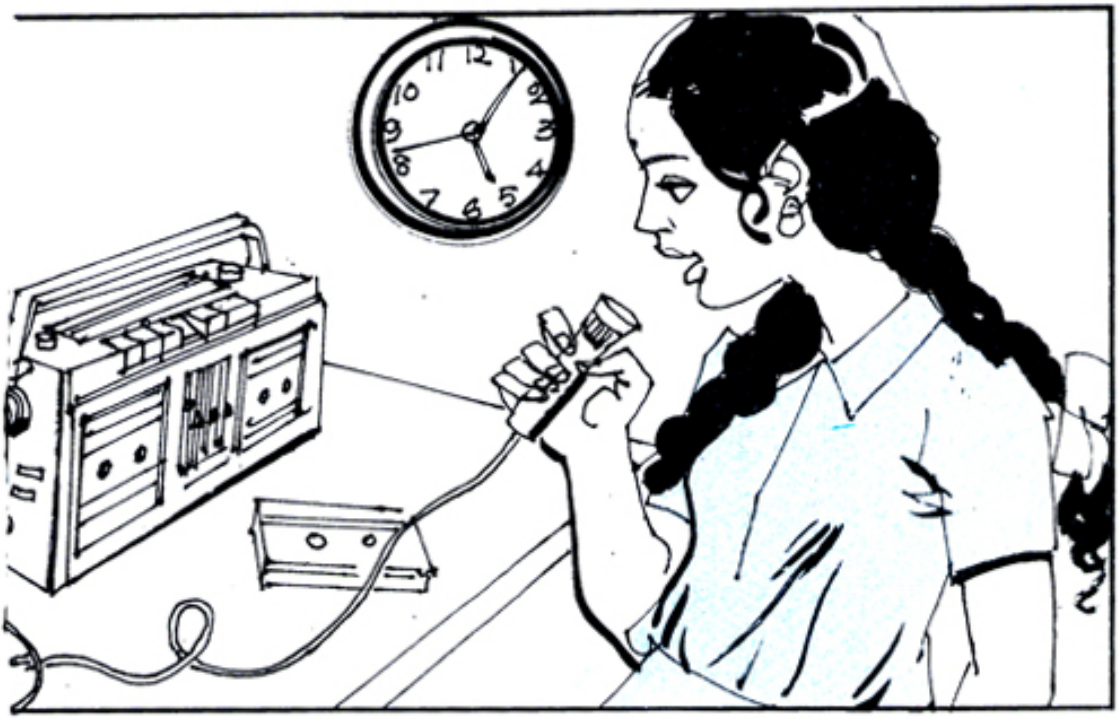
1. RECORD YOURSELF EVERYDAY. No, I don't want you to go around carrying a tape recorder wherever you go and record the conversations that you have with your friends.

If you start doing that, you might not have any friends left! What I would like you to do is to switch the

tape recorder on and talk about anything you like for about a minute or two. Only one or two minutes, you ask?

Let me tell you that talking about something for a minute or two can be a very difficult task - especially when what you are talking about is totally unprepared. Yes, unprepared. That is very important. I don't want you to go to the cassette player with a prepared speech. Don't read something from a piece of paper on which you have written everything. Don't switch on the cassette player knowing well what you are going to say. That's not how things work in real life.

In our everyday conversations, we have no clue what our friend is going to say and how we are going to respond. We do not have prepared conversations. We have to be spontaneous; we have to think on our feet. We have to use our noodle to keep a conversation going. This is why you shouldn't read out prepared speeches.



2. TALK ABOUT ANYTHING THAT INTERESTS YOU. Choose a topic that interests you.

Only a few people can talk about any topic under the sun. Not all of us can. Even a person who has a good command of the language, finds it difficult to talk about things that don't interest him.

For someone who is in the pro-

cess of improving his/her language, it is extremely important that you talk about something that interests you. Talk about anything: cricket, movies, film stars, friends, teachers, ambitions, what you like and dislike...

It should be something about which you have a few things to say. Pick a different topic for each day. Spend a minute or two talking; don't exceed two minutes.

3. LISTEN TO YOURSELF. Once you have finished recording yourself, listen to what you have said.

You may be disappointed with your performance. But don't let that bother you.

It doesn't matter. Don't get angry with yourself and erase what you have recorded. DON'T ERASE ANY OF THE RECORDINGS. Keep them as a record, especially the early recordings.

Now the question is what is that you look for? Listen for the following:

* How do you sound? Do you sound interested in what you are saying, or do you sound bored?

* What is the rate of your speech? Are you speaking very quickly? Is it slow?

* Do you run out of breath by the time you finish a sentence?

* Do you keep using the same words over and over again? When you don't know what to say, do you fill in the gaps with expressions like "you know", "well, as I said"?

* What kind of grammatical mistakes are you making?

* Are you putting on an accent?

* Are you fluent?

Keep these questions in mind as you listen to yourself every day. For the next one month, keep talking to your tape recorder. Make it your best friend. And remember, don't erase any of your recordings. Happy talking!

S. Upendran

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